



TROOP 127 & 7127 PARENT HANDBOOK



FOR THE PARENTS OF NEW SCOUTS

WELCOME!

It is our pleasure to welcome you to our Scouting family, Troops 127 (Boys) and 7127 (Girls). The mission of the BSA, is to prepare young people to make ethical choices over their lifetimes. It does this by instilling values that will positively influence three critical areas of development: character, citizenship, and physical, mental and emotional fitness. It is our aim to enrich your child's life and make a positive difference in the kind of person they will become.

BSA has a tried and true program that we follow to carry out their mission. This parent handbook is intended to help you ease into the BSA and to smoothly transition from Cub Scouts. If you and your child are new to the Scouting experience, it will give you the foundation you need to grasp how and why we do things. We hope it will answer most of your basic questions.

You and your Scout are about to begin an exciting new chapter in your family's life that should prove gratifying and rewarding for everyone. If you come from a Cub Scout Pack, you will first notice that there are distinct differences in the way meetings are conducted and the increased role that the youth assume in running the Troops. Try to

think of this as “organized chaos!” As our scouts age and are influenced by their Boy Scout experience, we see them learn how to think for themselves, work with others, communicate their ideas for implementation, and develop leadership skills. Together we have up to seven years, between the ages of 11 and 18, to positively affect and support these ideals.

We seek your help and assistance from the very beginning of our journey by requesting that you help your scout, but also gradually step back and allow your Scout to take on more responsibility during the first critical year of acclimation to a Troop in the BSA. When you or your scout have questions about activities, give them the opportunity to find the answers by speaking with the Troop Guide, Patrol Leader, or Senior Patrol Leader. Ideally your Scout should initiate phone calls or email when they need to schedule a Board of Review or speak with a Merit Badge Counselor. Kids aren't used to phoning adults or older youth. Help them by going over what they need to ask and have them write down questions (and the answers when they get them). Give your scout the tools they need to make the call and let them do it!

Your involvement and support in this manner accomplishes several things. Most importantly it gives your child the opportunity to develop responsibility and independence. By referring them to the Patrol Leader or Senior Patrol Leader, you help develop the leadership skills of the other Scouts. You will find that as you help your child in these areas in the first year, he or she will require less and less of your guidance. It does take patience, especially as we allow them to safely fail and learn from missteps. Ideally our Troops are “Scout-run” and with your assistance we can get as close as possible to that ideal. The more independent your child becomes, the better run our Troop

becomes.

We would like to take this opportunity to extend an invitation to all parents to become actively involved in our Troop family. Experience has shown that the Scouts who have the best and most successful Scouting experience have parents who are involved in some way with their child's Scouting adventure. We are a busy, active organization and it takes many adults behind the scenes and some in uniform to provide the framework and appropriate supervision to allow the scouts to lead the Troop. Some adult areas of responsibility are long-term and others are task-oriented. Regardless of your availability, we encourage your participation.

Again, welcome to our Scouting family! We look forward to a long, rewarding relationship with you and your son.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

If you only read two pages out of this guide, read the next two. Your child is now a BSA Scout and responsibilities in preparing for and participating in activities and campouts will dramatically change. Although there is dedicated adult leadership, the Scouts are given much of the responsibility for how the Troop functions. We discuss and plan events and activities at Troop meetings. Typically there will be emailed announcements and flyers, and activities are routinely posted on our Google calendar. As parents, you can assist in making sure your Scout gets the needed information and fully enjoys scouting opportunities. Here are some quick tips that are explained in greater detail in the remainder of this handbook:

1. Parents should always feel free to attend meetings. We encourage you to observe how the scouts operate the troop meetings. You are highly encouraged to help as called upon.
2. The Troop meets on Thursday evenings at 6:30 PM. The Council has its Roundtable meetings the first Wednesday of each month. We have our parent/adult committee meetings monthly as needed and as schedules permit. Often on the Thursday night following the Roundtable meeting
3. We expect Scouts to wear their Scout uniform to all meetings and for departure to all outings. Wearing the uniform shows the Scout's commitment to the Scouting program and identifies them as a member of a BSA Troop. If a Scout is coming from another event they should bring their uniform and change in the restroom. There are 2 different uniforms, the Class "A" is the one with patches and when in doubt the default, the Class "B" uniform is a troop t-shirt.
4. The Scouts plan a calendar of activities a year in advance.
5. Check our Google calendar for the latest information on our activities.
6. Upcoming events are announced at Troop meetings. Your child should have a notebook with paper and a pen/pencil to take notes. Flyers and permission slips will generally be available for pickup and are posted digitally. Sign-ups are done with a parent volunteer who will be at the meetings.
7. The Patrol (a sub-unit of the Troop, like a Den) decides what they will eat on campouts and which Scout is responsible for obtaining the food. The shopper should turn in receipts for reimbursement. Most campouts go from Friday evening to Sunday noon. The Friday evening meal is often eaten before departure, Scouts may bring a sack supper, or a stop will be planned. Please note, normally we do not stop enroute to our destination. Participants typically return to the church upon completion of the outing for unloading, sorting, and pick-up by families.

8. Transportation is provided by adult volunteers, usually by adults participating in the outing and by parents of participating Scouts. To limit the expenses on those that usually drive, the boys may be required to pay for gas for any trips over 40 miles one way as part of the campout fee. This is incorporated into the outing fee. We normally meet in the St. Peter Catholic Church at 5001 North Sherman Ave.

9. We work hard to encourage and assist each Scout in attaining the rank of First Class in their first year. However, to do this, your child must participate in Troop meetings and outings and have an older Scout or uniformed leader (not a parent) record progress in his Scout handbook.

10. Scouts are expected to participate in as many meetings and outings as possible. Being an active member of the Troop is a requirement for advancement. Allowances are made for participation in school sports and other extracurriculars.

11. When a Scout completes the requirements for advancement he or she must have a Scoutmaster Conference with a uniformed leader and go before a Board of Review (3-4 Troop Committee members). The Scout is responsible for arranging a time for a Scoutmaster conference. Boards of Review are typically held the third Thursday of the month, but may occur any meeting time with enough adults present. The Scout is responsible for contacting the Advancement Chairperson to inform them about a review request.

12. Scouts may work on Merit Badges only with an approved, registered counselor. They may never work with an adult one on one (isolated from others). Scouts often focus on the 12 specific and 9 elective Merit Badges required to attain the rank of Eagle Scout. These are listed in the Scout Handbook. The troop routinely provides merit badge opportunities.

13. Courts of Honor are held 3-4 times a year to recognize Scouts who have earned Merit Badges and/or advanced in rank. All Troop members are expected to be present and parents are highly encouraged to attend. A snack or meal is generally planned by the Scouts and provided potluck style by all families.

14. While there is an annual fee to register each youth and adult with the Boy Scouts of America, there is currently no annual fee to join our Troops. Traditionally, we have two or three fundraisers during the year, and we expect each family to support the fundraising efforts of the troops since the funds support all members through subsidies and troop operation expenses. If a scout/family chooses not to participate, they will be required to make a donation equal to the expected revenue for that scout. Additionally, the Glaciers Edge Council conducts a Friends of Scouting capital funds drive each spring. Contributions are encouraged, but voluntary.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Where does the Troop meet and how often?

Answer. Regular Troop meetings are held every Thursday night from 6:30 to 8:00 PM, except during holidays and spring break. Meetings are typically held at Saint Peter Catholic Church. Sometimes we have Action Adventure nights that are destination activities. These are detailed in the Google Calendar and by email.

2. Do I have to be a member of the Church to become a member of BSA?

Answer. No, it is not necessary to be a member of any church to join our Troops. We meet at Saint Peter on North Sherman Avenue and are actually chartered through the Sherman Avenue United Methodist Church. Both churches graciously sponsors the Troop and provides us with a places to conduct our meetings and store equipment. Our Troops have Scouts that are members of many different faiths and denominations. The twelfth point of the Scout Law states that a Scout is Reverent. Additionally, the Oath pledges a Scout's promise to do his duty to God. Scout units often offer "Scout's Own" worship services during outings and encourages Scouts to participate actively in the faith of the individual's choice.

3. What is the cost to be a youth member of Troop 127?

Answer. When a new scout joins the troop, they need to pay a national membership fee to cover the cost of the first year registration fees, and a one-year subscription to A Scout's Life magazine. This is an annual fee for each scout that is set by the national organization. Subsequent years' registration fees may be paid for out of the scouts' individual account using money collected through various fund-raising efforts.

A fee is charged for every camping trip as well as for summer camp. The troop subsidizes the cost of our scouting program through a variety of fundraising events and activities. This is why it is so important for each family to participate in the fundraisers; it reduces the expense of each family and scout. See the Appendix below for more information on fundraisers.

4. Who needs to wear a uniform?

Answer. The BSA is a uniformed organization. This promotes a sense of identity and equality. Uniforms should be worn to all meetings and activities unless informed otherwise. For fall/winter meetings and for travel to and from outings, scouts should wear the tan scout shirt (Class "A" uniform). Wearing the complete uniform is *required* for Scoutmaster Conferences, Boards of Review, and all formal ceremonies such as Troop Courts of Honor, Eagle Scout Ceremonies

and Scout Sunday. If the Scout is coming to a Troop meeting directly from an organized athletic event such as baseball, soccer, etc., they should bring the uniform and change in the restroom. Uniforms should be worn on departure to all campouts and activities (unless otherwise specified) and other times during the activity when necessary. The Class "B" uniform is worn by scouts during summer meetings, at summer camp, during outdoor activities, and some volunteer activities.

The Class "A", also called the Dress Uniform consists of:

- 1 tan short (or long) sleeve Scout shirt. Some Scouts prefer to wear a long sleeve t-shirt or sweatshirt under the short sleeve Scout shirt during the winter. A long sleeve Scout shirt is not a requirement.
- Scout shorts or pants. In good condition (no holes or frays).
- 1 Scout belt. Several types are available. The web belt with brass buckle is the most practical. Otherwise, pretty much any nice belt is permissible.
- 1 or 2 pairs of olive green Scout crew socks. (Optional)
- 1 Merit Badge sash. We recommended you the buy the "long" sash and take a tuck at the top. This way you don't have to sew the Merit Badges onto a new sash as your Scout grows.
- Patches (for each shirt): round purple World Scouting emblem, Glaciers Edge Council patch (these come in a number of different designs, any is acceptable), and Troop numerals.

The Class "B", also called the Field uniform consists of:

- Any t-shirt with our Troop(s) numbers on them. Scouts typically design one to wear at summer camp to commemorate the event.

Your Child will be provided one of each of the following at no additional charge:

- Troop 27 Neckerchief and slide
- 1 pair of green shoulder epaulets.
- Patch for any Troop office they holds.
- Rank badges, Merit Badges, and other awards as they are earned.

Although not part of the formal "uniform," the following are considered essential items at all Scouting activities:

- Scout Handbook (provided by the Troop)
- 3-ring (1 inch) notebook with paper and pencil/pen, Troop roster, and forms and permission slips for outings.

5. Where can I purchase uniforms and Scouting equipment?

Answer. See Appendix 1 for a guide to Scout uniforms and equipment including the address of the Scout Store and other locations in the area that sell uniforms and equipment. While the

Scout Store and catalog offer some good equipment, if you find a better item at a better price elsewhere, by all means buy it. Outfitting a growing Scout can be costly. Take advantage of used uniforms other scouts in your youth's Troop have outgrown. Buy uniforms slightly big so they will last longer. We recommend purchasing one short sleeve shirt and a pair of shorts. Your child can wear a long sleeve shirt under the short sleeve Scout shirt. When hiking and camping, your scout will be allowed to wear long pants appropriate for the environment and weather. Put your child's name on all equipment and clothing. We acquire lost items after every outing.

6. How can I find out where to sew the patches on?

Answer. There is a guide in the front and back cover of the BSA Scout Handbook. See any uniformed leader if you still have questions.

7. How are the Troops organized?

Answer. Troop 127 is our boys troop and 7127 is our girls troop, they are organized like BSA Troops everywhere. The Patrol is the basic "team" unit of the Troop. Our Troops are sibling troops that often choose to participate in activities as a combined unit, but both are also able to operate independently.

Patrols.

Our Troops are made up of Patrols, groups of six to ten youth who work together as a team. Each Patrol elects its own leader who serves a six-month term. The elected Senior Patrol Leader (SPL) and the Patrol Leaders form the Patrol Leaders Council (PLC). It is this council's job to plan and run the Troop program. Each Patrol Leader represents their Patrol on the council, and conveys to their Patrol the plans and decisions the council makes. Patrols can, and are encouraged, to have their own meetings and plan and carry out their own Patrol activities.

New Scout Patrols.

The purpose of the New Scout Patrol is to introduce new, younger scouts to the methods of BSA and to help them master the skills leading to First Class rank. A senior Scout known as a Troop Guide is appointed by the Scoutmaster and assists them during this first year. The Troop Guide stays with this Patrol for one year. They then become a regular Patrol. Unlike the other Patrols, a New Scout Patrol Leader's term is 1-2 months and the role rotates between the members. This gives each new scout an opportunity to have leadership experience. Note: This short duration experience does NOT count toward the required leadership service necessary to advance to higher Scout ranks.

8. What are the leadership positions in the Troops?

Each Troop has the same youth leadership structure. Tenure in a position of responsibility (often

called a leadership position) is required for Star, Life, and Eagle ranks. Scouts must discuss their choice of position of responsibility with the Scoutmaster before they can assume the position. Potential leaders prepare a leadership commitment form (Appendix 3) acknowledging the responsibilities of the position they seek and identifying personal goals for their tenure. The commitment is acknowledged (signed) by the Scout, his/her leadership mentor, his/her parent(s), and the Senior Patrol Leader. The SPL and SM may remove a youth from a leadership position in cases where the youth has failed to fulfill a minimal level of responsibility in the leadership position. It is expected that youth leaders will make mistakes, overlook matters, forget things, etc. They will be encouraged, coached and supported. Nonetheless, it is expected that the youth leaders will adopt a sufficient level of activity and personal responsibility to warrant the position.

The **Senior Patrol Leader (SPL)** is the youth leader of the Troop and is elected by their fellow Scouts. He/She sets the agenda and presides at all Patrol Leaders Council (PLC) meetings, runs the weekly Troop meetings and assigns other youth leaders specific responsibilities as needed. Twice a year, all scouts in the Troop that are present on election night elect this Scout. He/She may be reelected. Candidates normally hold at least Life Scout rank and must be approved by the Scoutmaster. The Scoutmaster mentors the SPL during his term.

The **Assistant Senior Patrol Leader (ASPL)** is appointed by the SPL. He/She assists the SPL in conducting meetings and acts as the SPL in his/her absence. She/He is responsible for training and giving direction to the Troop's Quartermaster, Scribe, Historian, Librarian, and Instructors. Candidates must hold at least First Class rank, although they are typically more senior, and must be approved by the Scoutmaster. The Scoutmaster mentors the ASPL during their term.

The **Scribe** is the Troop secretary. She/He attends the PLC meetings and keeps a record of their decisions. She/He keeps a record of attendance at meetings and activities. She/He also sends thank you notes to organizations and individuals that assist the Troop in their program. She/He is appointed by the SPL and must be approved by the Scoutmaster. Typically an ASM or Committee member mentors the Scribe during their term.

The **Quartermaster** is in charge of all Troop equipment. He/She keeps a current inventory of Troop equipment and sees that it remains in good condition. She/He issues camping gear to Patrols in advance of outings and ensures it is returned in a ready for issue condition or with a list of specific deficiencies requiring correction prior to reuse. She/He is appointed by the SPL and must be approved by the Scoutmaster. An ASM or Committee member mentors the Quartermaster during their term.

The **Librarian** keeps the Troops Merit Badge books and other written material available for checkout by Scouts. She/He keeps a record of material loaned out. She/He makes recommendations for disposal of outdated material and the purchase of new material. She/He is appointed by the SPL and must be approved by the Scoutmaster. An ASM or Committee

member mentors the Librarian during his term.

The **Historian** collects and cares for the Troop's memorabilia including photos, news stories, awards, etc. She/He maintains helps maintain posting photos to the Troops Facebook. She/He is appointed by the SPL and must be approved by the Scoutmaster. An ASM or Committee member mentors the Historian during their term.

The **Chaplain's Aide** assists the Troop SPL in promoting reverence and the religious emblems programs. She/He is responsible for preparing and leading the Scout's own religious service when the Troop camps on Sundays or designates another scout to lead it, if he/she is not able to be present. She/He also coordinates participation in Scout Sunday celebrations each February. She/He is appointed by the SPL and must be approved by the Scoutmaster. An ASM or Committee member mentors the Chaplain's Aide during their term.

A **Den Chief** works with the Scoutmaster, a Cubmaster, and a Den Leader to assist them with activities at Den meetings. She/He helps the Cub Scouts earn achievements and serves as a Scout role model for the cubscouts. She/He acts as a recruiter for the Troops by bringing graduating Webelos Scouts into the Troop. A successful Den Chief earns the Den Chief Award. The Scoutmaster or an ASM along with the Den Leader mentor the Den Chief during his term. We can have multiple Den Chiefs sponsored by the troop.

Instructors are older Scouts who have advanced in rank and whose training provides a core of skills and knowledge on which the SPL can call to develop and execute training programs in support of the Troop's annual program. The Scoutmaster or an ASM mentors Instructors during their term.

Troop Guides (TGs) are older Scouts, usually of at least Life Scout rank, who are both a leader and a "big sibling" to the New Scout Patrols. Often viewed as the toughest job in the Troop, Troop Guides are preferably Scouts who have previously served in a variety of leadership positions, including SPL. Troop Guides are appointed by the Scoutmaster for one year and remain with their assigned New Scout Patrol for their first year in the Boy Scout Program. The Scoutmaster or an ASM mentors the Troop Guides during their term. Troop Guides attend PLC meetings with the New Scout Patrol Leader.

Junior Assistant Scoutmasters (JASMs) are Scouts who are at least 16 years old (typically Eagle Scouts) that supervise and support other youth leaders as assigned by the Scoutmaster. They may also work as an instructor. This position, which is not always filled, provides an opportunity for Scouts with significant leadership experience (SPL, ASPL, PL, TG, etc.) and Boy Scout program understanding to experience a leadership position similar to that of an adult leader. JASMs often become registered adult leaders after their 18th birthday. The Scoutmaster mentors JASMs during their term.

Patrol Leaders (PLs) are responsible for their individual Patrols at all times. They preside at

Patrol meetings, as well as lead and manage their Patrol during Troop functions. They represent their Patrol at PLC meetings and report to the SPL for all matters concerning their Patrol. The PL is elected by the Scouts in his Patrol twice a year. She/He is normally at least First Class rank and must be approved by the Scoutmaster. The PL appoints an Assistant Patrol Leader (APL). PLs are mentored by an ASM during their term. Patrol Leaders represent their Patrol at PLC meetings.

9. When are elections?

Answer. Troop elections are held twice a year. Typically, elections are held after pack cross-over ceremonies in February and again in August. Ideally the terms of office begin on the first Troop meeting in March and September. Positions are filled for six-month terms.

10. How do Scouts advance in rank?

Answer. Scouting provides a series of surmountable challenges and steps to achieve through the advancement process. Each Scout plans her/his advancement and progresses at their own pace as they address each challenge. The Scout is rewarded for each achievement, e.g., instant recognition and Courts of Honor, which helps them gain self-confidence. The steps in the advancement system help youth grow in self-reliance and their ability to help others. Our Troops plan many different activities that ensure that opportunities are available for youth to work on rank advancement.

When a scout joins the BSA, they learn the Scout Law, Oath, Slogan and Motto, as well as a few things about the Troop. He/She is then designated a "Scout" and begins their advancement journey. Following Scout rank, there are six ranks in Scouting. They are Tenderfoot, Second Class, First Class, Star, Life, and Eagle. There are four basic steps in Boy Scout advancement: the Scout learns, she/he is tested, she/he is reviewed, and she/he is recognized. The steps apply to all six ranks. Often rank advancements will be presented at the next Troop meeting after earning that rank and recognized at the next Court of Honor. A thorough checklist is provided in the Scout Handbook on the requirements for each rank.

The Boy Scouts of America has developed an excellent program that enables scouts to become increasingly proficient with a broad range of scouting and leadership skills. The advancement program is divided into two groups of ranks:

- (1) Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class, and
- (2) Star, Life, and Eagle.

Note: *While parents are encouraged to review and work with Scouts on their requirements for these ranks, they may not "sign off" on any requirement as having been completed; only designated Scouts, the Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmasters can do this.*

The first advancement group has been developed to provide the Scout with the background and skills necessary to enjoy the Scouting experience, including camping. It also introduces her/him

to the ideals of Scouting (Oath, Law, and Motto) and the concept of service to others. During this period, the Troop provides training to the new Scout. The BSA (and our Troop's) goal is to have each Scout advance to the rank of First Class in about a year. The advancement checklist in the back of the Handbook identifies the pages within the Handbook that discuss the skill a Scout is expected to learn for the requirement to be signed off. Scouts of Life or Eagle rank, the Troop Guide, Scoutmaster, and Assistant Scoutmasters may "sign off" most of these requirements. They should clearly initial and date (in ink) the advancement checklist in the back of the current Scout Handbook. Certain requirements, namely the activity and service project participation and Scout Spirit requirements, are only signed off by the Scoutmaster or his designee. You and your scout can help to track their progress online via Scoutbook, or online rank advancement tracking system. It is even available as a phone app.

The second group has no specific skill development requirements outside the attainment of Merit Badges, but requires the Scout to be an active member of their Troop and Patrol, live the Scout Oath and Law in everyday life, increase service to others, and successfully serve in various Troop positions of responsibility. During this period, a Scout advances based upon what they give to Troop, family, church, and community, not on what they give her/him. Only the Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmasters may "sign off" these requirements. Once a Scout has completed all of the requirements for advancement to a new rank, she/he must arrange a Scoutmaster Conference and a subsequent Board of Review.

A Scout asks the Scoutmaster for a Scoutmaster Conference. The Scoutmaster may delegate the conference to an ASM. The SM or ASM and the Scout will then agree on a time and place for the conference [conferences are never held in isolation, but always in full view of others]. Scoutmaster conferences will be held as soon as practicable after the request. However, at times, it is necessary to set a specific date and time. The Scoutmaster Conference is a visit between the Scoutmaster (or an ASM) and a Scout and is a valuable opportunity for the Scoutmaster to discuss with the Scout her/his activity in the Troop and her/his understanding and practice of the ideals of Scouting. For the junior ranks, the Scoutmaster and the Scout may discuss favorite outings, possible changes to Troop meetings, activities at school or home, and how the Scout defines and shows Scout spirit and may ask the Scout to demonstrate certain Scout skills her/he has learned. For the senior ranks the Scoutmaster may ask the Scout to make more recommendations about the Troop's program. They may discuss leadership positions in which the Scout is interested and what goals the Scout has if she/he fills the position. The Scoutmaster also encourages all Scouts to set personal and Scouting goals to pursue as they continue their advancement. At the end of the Scoutmaster Conference both the Scout and the Scoutmaster will know if the Scout is ready for a Board of Review. The SM or ASM identifies the completion of this requirement by initialing and dating the advancement checklist.

Following successful completion of a Scoutmaster Conference, the Scout arranges a Board of Review. She/He should contact the Advancement Chairperson to arrange a board. Boards are typically held on the last Tuesday of each month. The board is comprised of at least 3 members

of the Troop Committee. The purpose of the board is not to retest the Scout, but rather to ensure she/he has completed all of the requirements, to determine the quality of his Troop experience, and to encourage him/her to advance toward the next rank. Each review also includes a discussion of ways in which the Scout sees himself living the Scout Oath and Law in her/his everyday life.

11. How does the Merit Badge program work?

Answer. Scouting's Merit Badge program permits scouts to learn about any one of a number of activities in greater depth. A complete listing of all of the Merit Badges (there are over 100) can be found on pp. 188-193 of the Scout Handbook. The BSA has designated a list of 12 Merit Badges as "Eagle required" (some have alternative choices). This means that each scout who wants to attain the rank of Star, Life, or Eagle must earn a specific number of Merit Badges.

Scouts can earn Merit Badges in any of the following ways:

- By participating in planned Merit Badge classes at Boy Scout summer camp.
- Attending and actively participating in one of the Merit Badge opportunities scheduled as part of the Troop's annual calendar.
- By participating in some of the Troop's outings that focus on specific Merit Badges such as canoeing, pioneering, wilderness survival, etc.
- By working with one of the Troop's Merit Badge counselors on a Merit Badge.
- By seeking additional merit badge opportunities with available counselors, other troops, district or council events. (Prior approval of Troop Scoutmaster is required).

A complete listing of the current Merit Badge counselors is available online via Scoutbook.

Merit Badges are part of the advancement program for the Star, Life and Eagle ranks. Merit Badges require a Scout to have detailed knowledge about a variety of topics in a subject area. This is why the Merit Badge book is required to work on a badge. There are no specific rank requirements for earning merit badges, but completion of related advancement requirements through First Class prior to beginning a Merit Badge is required (e.g., having knowledge of first aid advancement requirements is the first requirement of the first aid Merit Badge). An adult Merit Badge counselor who is proficient and registered in that area administers each Merit Badge. Please note, our Troops adhere to the 2-deep leadership rule, meaning that scouts should never meet privately with merit badge counselors without additional supervision by their parent or a trained scout leader.

The Scoutmaster (or ASM) determines if the scout has the necessary prerequisites and if the badge is appropriate for the scout. If the Scoutmaster believes that the scout is ready to earn the badge, then they sign the Merit Badge application (blue card) permitting the Scout to begin work on the badge. They also provides him/her with the name of a registered counselor. If a scout wishes to pursue a Merit Badge for which the Troop does not have a counselor, the

Scoutmaster will try to locate a counselor. Scouts must realize that to ensure the integrity of the process, counselors have pledged to enforce all of the requirements for the Merit Badge. Earning Merit Badges is the responsibility of the Scout. The procedure for earning a Merit Badge is:

1. The Scout obtains from the Scoutmaster (or ASM) a signed Merit Badge application and the name of a qualified and registered Merit Badge counselor.
2. Along with another Scout, or parent he/she sets up and attends his/her first appointment with the Merit Badge counselor. A Scout may never work alone on a Merit Badge with a counselor; she/he must always have a buddy or additional adult present.
3. Upon completion of the Merit Badge requirements, the Scout obtains the counselor's signature certifying completion and a unit leader's signature acknowledging completion. Although two or more Scouts can work on a badge together, they must individually complete all of the requirements.
4. The Scout keeps his/her section of the blue card for his records (**NOTE: *this is important when presenting objective evidence for attaining the rank of Eagle Scout***), the counselor keeps his section for his/her records, and the third section is turned in to the Advancement Chairman to be recorded officially in Scoutbook, our online tracking system.
5. Typically the Merit Badge will be awarded at the next Court of Honor. However, the Scout will likely be recognized at the Troop meeting immediately after earning the badge. The Merit Badge is sewed on the Scout sash.

The Troop's library provides booklets on some Merit Badges that a Scout can earn. Since the books are updated often, we don't always have the latest version of the books. The Troop Librarian will have the library available at each Troop meeting for review and book check-out. Scouts are free to look through them and decide which Merit Badges they would like to pursue. The requirements are listed inside the front cover and the book provides the detailed knowledge and background necessary to earn the badge. Merit Badge requirements may also be found at <http://www.meritbadge.com>. If our Troops do not have a Merit Badge book for one a Scout desires to earn, they can be purchased at the Scout store, if needed for merit badge completion.

NOTE: *Each time your Scout receives a Merit Badge or advances in rank she/he will be given a card. These are important to keep for his records if the Scout desires to pursue the rank of Eagle Scout. The cards are proof of advancement and the Merit Badges earned. We have found that a three ring binder with clear baseball card plastic inserts is the best way to keep the BSA merit badge cards.*

12. Does the Troops go on campouts?

Answer. Each troop plans about 12 camping activities each year. Some are joint, and some are individual to the two troops. Typically we do three different kinds of camping. The first is what we call car camping. This involves carrying our equipment from the parking lot to a prepared

campsite, setting it up, and not moving again. The second is doing this at cabins in the winter. The third is backpacking. This involves hiking, sometimes daily from campsite to campsite, carrying everything we need on our backs. For backpacking the emphasis is on traveling light and minimizing our impact on the environment. Almost all backpacking gear can be used in car camping, but not all car camping gear is appropriate for backpacking.

The best way to stay comfortable in the outdoors and defend against hypothermia is to keep dry and wear multiple layers of clothing. Good rain gear is a must. Hypothermia, excessive loss of body heat, can be a concern at temperatures as high as 50 degrees. Smaller bodies tend to give up heat faster than bigger bodies. Drinking plenty of water, not soda (we discourage soda), is necessary to stay hydrated.

The best fabrics for outdoor wear are synthetic or wool-poly and cotton-poly blends. They are more durable, and dry much more quickly than 100 percent cotton. Socks should be wool, wool blends, or synthetics. A synthetic sock liner aids in removing moisture from the feet and the prevention of blisters. For long underwear, polypropylene or Thermostat are the fabrics of choice. The Scout Handbook will talk a lot about fabrics, but always keep in mind this handy old backpacker's saying: "In the outdoors, cotton is rotten."

Until your child acquires a little experience, they'll probably forget some items when they go camping. Encourage him/her to use the checklists found in the Scout Handbook. While you should let them be the one to make preparations, you might sneak a peek to ensure they have appropriate weather gear and enough warm clothes. Otherwise, experience (including occasional mistakes) is a powerful teacher. Rest assured they'll learn, and the older Scouts and adult leaders are there to keep them safe and healthy while they do.

ADMINISTRATION

Transportation. We do not own a bus to transport Scouts. We do, however, have a trailer to transport some equipment. Ideally, transportation is a shared responsibility of all the adults in the Troops. All parents are expected to periodically volunteer to furnish transportation for outings. If everyone regularly volunteers then the burden does not fall on anyone in particular. However, we know that this is not always possible, so to limit the expenses on those that usually drive, cost for gas for any trips over 40 miles one way are built into the cost of the activity. The Troops normally assemble at the St. Peter Catholic Church parking lot. Prior to departing, we ensure each Scout has a complete and signed permission slip and health form as required. At the conclusion of the event, Scouts are normally returned to the Church parking lot. We attempt to have the scouts phone home at least 10 minutes before we arrive at the church to arrange pickup. Consistent with the Scouting youth protection requirements, adult leaders are never alone in a car with a single scout other than their own children.

Permission Slips. Permission slips/liability waivers are required for each Scout for every outing. These are usually available a few weeks in advance of the outing. They are due back no later than the Troop meeting before the outing. A Scout has to have a permission slip; there are no exceptions even when the parent is accompanying their scout. An example of a permission slip is in Appendix 2.

Medication. Medication that must be taken on an outing should be put in a ziplock bag with the Scout's name and dosage information (two sets are required for high adventure trips). The bag is given to the adult trip leader (or adult designee) at the assembly point before the trip. It is the Scout's responsibility to remember to ask for medication at the appropriate time.

Insure the exact dosage is put in the original RX bottle or clearly labeled with the Doctor's name, phone number, name of drug, and dosage. If sending extra as a backup, provide the same information on the bottle. This information is recommended in case there are medical complications.

Prohibited Items. There are several items that are absolutely prohibited from scout activities. They include fireworks, knives with blades longer than 4", alcoholic beverages, pornography, tobacco of any kind, and illegal substances. Music devices, phones, handheld video games, etc may be played in the car going to a scout activity. Upon arrival, they are often collected and secured, to allow the scouts to better focus on enjoying the activities. Adult leaders may take and hold problem items and hand over to parents after the event.

Discipline. Every Scout pledges to live by the Scout Oath and Law at all times. If all Scouts make this a practice, then there won't be problems. Unfortunately, sometimes Scouts forget these basic principles. When appropriate, adult leadership will step in to prevent behavior that could cause health and safety risks. Scouts will be counseled about their behavior and usually allowed to continue to take part in the activity if they agree to appropriately modify their conduct. Under no circumstances is hazing allowed in our Troops and it will be dealt with accordingly, if it occurs. If in the judgment of the Scoutmaster or trip leader a Scout poses a significant safety or discipline risk to others present, he/she will be sent home from an activity. It will be the parent's responsibility to pick up the Scout from the location, whether it be a Troop meeting or at a distant campout. If the Scoutmaster determines that it is appropriate, the PLC will review disciplinary matters and will suggest corrective action. Their recommendations may include removal of a scout from office, temporary suspension from camping activities, etc. The Scoutmaster must approve their action and will notify the parents of the Scout and the Troop Committee. In severe cases, Troop Committee approval may be required for the proposed corrective action. We have been fortunate to never need to take any kind of extraordinary steps.

Safety. The Scouting program includes use of tools that can potentially be dangerous if used inappropriately. Because of that, there is a formal training program that each Scout must complete before using these tools. This certification is the Totin' Chip. This class is provided at

the Fast Start campout, normally held in spring. Certification may also be obtained through work and practice during other Troop outings/meetings. Repeated safety violations will result in the rescinding of the Scout's permission to use these tools. Permission will be restored once the Scout has demonstrated the knowledge and maturity to use them safely.

Scouting frequently involves the building and use of fires. The Fireman Chit training program, also presented at the spring campout, gives the Scout the training she/he needs to build and use fire safely. Certification may also be obtained through work and practice during other Troop outings. Grass and forest fires are a significant hazard. Playing with fire and the burning of dangerous (e.g., plastics, flammables) or unauthorized (e.g., garbage) items will not be permitted or tolerated. We, also, constantly remind the scouts, "What goes in the fire, stays in the fire." Repeated safety violations will result in the rescission of the Scout's permission to build and use fire. Permission will be restored once the Scout has demonstrated the knowledge and maturity to use them safely.

The BSA has a Guide to Safe Scouting that covers nearly every aspect and activity the scouts enjoy. If you desire a copy, please ask one of the leaders or feel free to download it from the web. We enforce these safety standards both for the health and safety of the kids and the liability protection of your leaders, our sponsoring organization, and the BSA.

ADULT LEADERSHIP

Troop Resource Survey. Please take a moment and fill out the Troop Resource Survey. This will provide us with information on the experience and resources that we have in the Troop and will help us build a stronger scout program for our youth.

Scoutmaster. The Scoutmaster acts as a mentor and provides guidance to the Senior Patrol Leader and the Assistant Senior Patrol leaders. The Scoutmaster is nominated by the Troop's Committee and approved by the chartering organization.

Assistant Scoutmaster. Assistant Scoutmasters (ASMs) assist the Scoutmaster by overseeing specific elements of the program such as recruiting and new Scouts, outdoor activity coordination, Eagle coordinator, etc.

Troop Committee. Supporting a program as active as that of our Troops requires a lot of adult support. The Troop Committee consists of adults that register with the BSA and take the training offered by the BSA. They may be parents of member scouts, members of the sponsoring organization, or other persons interested in supporting youth activities. All parents should become a member of the committee by attending the meetings and registering as an adult member of the Boy Scouts. The intent of the committee is to spread the work of the troop around and not to burden a few adults with an impossible workload. Please contact our

Scoutmaster or Committee Chairman for an adult application. The Troop Committee's primary responsibilities are to support the Scoutmaster in delivering a quality program and handling the Troop's administration. The Scouting program cannot succeed without parent involvement. In fact, many who have attained the Eagle Scout rank indicate that one of the major reasons for their success was parental involvement in the scout troop. We are all busy!! However, involvement in the troop doesn't have to take much of your time. If we all pitch in, our role as parents supporting the troop will be much easier. Some of the positions on the committee are:

- **Chairman:** Elected by the Troop Committee, organizes the committee to see that all functions are delegated, coordinated, and completed. Maintains a close relationship with the chartered organization representative and Scoutmaster; monitors national and local policies affecting the Troop; ensures Troop representation at monthly roundtables; secures top-notch trained individuals for camp leadership; arranges for charter review and re-charter annually and plans the charter presentation.
- **Treasurer:** Pays bills on recommendation of the Scoutmaster and authorization of the Troop committee; maintains checking and saving accounts; trains and supervises the Troop scribe in record keeping; keeps adequate records in the Troop finances; supervises money-earning projects, including proper authorizations; supervises camp savings plan; leads in the preparation of the annual Troop budget; liaison for the Friends of Scouting campaign and reports Troop finances to the Troop committee at each meeting.
- **Secretary:** Takes notes at committee meetings; conducts general correspondence
- **Chartered Organization Representative:** Liaison between Chartering organization and Troop.
- **Outings Coordinator:** Promotes attendance for troop events to reach the goal of an outing per month and strong activity program. Coordinates and recruits adult volunteers for troop outings (including summer camp and any high adventure trip); promotes the qualification for the National Camping Award; ensures collection permission slips and medical forms for all Troop activities. Responsible for filing tour permits for qualifying outings. Makes timely reservations and reports to the Troop committee at each meeting.
- **Recruitment & Retention Coordinator:** Help scouts bring new members to the troop
- **Awards Coordinator:** Coordinates applications for youth and adult awards at troop, district, council, community, and national level.
- **Quartermaster:** Supervises and helps the Troop procure camping equipment; works with the quartermaster on inventory and proper storage and maintenance of all Troop equipment; makes periodic safety checks on all Troop camping gear; encourages Troop in the safe use of all outdoor equipment and reports to the Troop committee at each meeting.
- **Webelo to Scout Coordinator:** Specifically dedicated to a strong first year program
- **Training Coordinator:** Ensures Troop leaders and committee members have opportunities for training; maintains resources of up-to-date training materials, video tapes and other training resources; works with the district training team in scheduling Fast Start training for all new leaders; be responsible for BSA Youth Protection Training within the Troop; encourages periodic junior leader training within the Troop and at the

council/national levels; and reports to the Troop committee at each meeting.

- **Communications Coordinator:** Maintains the Troop digital presence
- **Advancement:** Maintains the Troop advancement and Merit Badge records
Encourages Scouts to advance in rank; works with the Troop scribe to maintain all Scout advancement records; helps facilitate quarterly Troop boards of review and courts of honor; develops and maintains a merit badge counselor list; makes a prompt report on the correct form to the council service center when a Troop board of review is held; secures badges and certificates; works with the Troop librarian to build and maintain a Troop library of merit badge pamphlets and other advancement literature and reports to the committee at each meeting.
- **Committee Member at Large:** Assists with Boards of Review and other duties as assigned by the Committee Chairman.

And we always need:

MERIT BADGE COUNSELOR: Is registered with the District and provides council/guidance to Scouts in a chosen field of expertise in any number of Merit Badges available. The merit badge counselor is the final authority for scout's completion of all requirements needed in earning a merit badge.

Adult Training. Understanding and effectively supporting the BSA program requires that adults receive BSA position specific training. BSA training is offered at four levels: Fast Start, Basic Leader Training, Leader Specific Training, and Advanced Training.

- Fast Start training is an online orientation. All adults (including parents) are encouraged to take this short training. The training provides an immediate comfort level for new leaders and parents enabling them to say, "I can do this!" Fast Start training is the first step for any new volunteer and is to be delivered immediately after a new leader registers and before he or she meets with any youth member.
- Basic Leader Training. All registered uniformed adult leaders must take this course and committee members are encouraged to do so also. We want to ensure that we are providing our youth the Scouting program as it is designed. The Basic Leader Training comprises two parts: New Leader Essentials for all unit-level leaders and Leader Specific training, which is based on the leader's unit-level position.
- For Scoutmasters and assistant Scoutmasters, Leader Specific training is divided into four parts. The first three parts concentrate on troop operation. The fourth part, which focuses on outdoor skills, lasts approximately a day and a half, depending on the skill level of the new leader. The leader is considered trained upon completion of New Leader Essentials, Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmaster Leader Specific Training, and Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills. For troop committee members, Leader Specific training includes the Troop Committee Challenge. By completing the Troop Committee Training, they are considered trained.
- The BSA advanced adult leader training is called Wood Badge (for the wooden beads awarded at completion of the course). This training involves a couple of weekends of

camping in addition to other sessions and work. The Glaciers Edge Council offers Wood Badge courses two to three times annually. Completion of the previous three levels of training are prerequisites for attending Wood Badge.

- All other training offered by the Yahara District and Glaciers Edge Council is considered supplemental training.
 - Monthly scout leader meetings (known as Roundtables) are held on the first Wednesday evening of every month. Information about upcoming Glaciers Edge Council events and Troop program ideas are distributed at these meetings.
 - **BSA Youth Protection Training is available online and is also offered by the District. This two-hour course covers the BSA policies on prevention of child abuse in the scouting program. All uniformed leaders are required to receive Youth protection training and all scout family adults are encouraged to do so.**
 - University of Scouting. An annual training day in March that provides a “degree” program in Troop, Venture, and District adult leadership.

Junior Leader Training. Most young Scouts have not had the opportunity to develop effective leadership skills. The Scoutmaster, ASMs, and some of the older Scouts provide Junior Leader Training (JLT) one to two times per year. This training is strongly encouraged for all the members of the Patrol Leader’s Council. Advanced training is offered to senior Scouts over the summer by the scout council. This weeklong training, called “National Youth Leadership Training,” is for scouts 14 years and older. It teaches advanced leadership skills and takes a deeper look at the patrol system. Scouts desiring to hold the position of SPL are strongly encouraged to attend. If funds allow, the Troop will pay the course tuition. The course also includes a commitment to a significant number of “Leadership Growth Assignments” (LGAs) to put the attendee’s newfound knowledge to work. Upon completion of the LGAs, the training patch is awarded. Den Chief training is also provided several times each year by the Yahara District and Glaciers Edge Council. This training teaches new Den Chiefs what to expect and techniques to help them do their job.

Order of the Arrow. Annually, in February or March, the Troop holds elections for the Order of the Arrow (OA). Founded in 1915, Scouting’s National Honor Society, the Order of the Arrow is an integral part of the council’s program. It is based on cheerful service. It uses some American Indian traditions and ceremonies to bestow recognition on scouts selected by their peers as those who “best exemplify the Scout Oath and Law in their daily lives” with membership in the Order of the Arrow.

Scouts who are elected to the OA are expected to provide service to Scouting beyond the Troop. Membership in the Order of the Arrow includes activities beyond normal Troop activities and many additional leadership opportunities. Scouts are eligible for election after reaching the rank of First Class. The youth must have experienced 15 days and nights of Boy Scout

camping during the two-year period prior to the election. The 15 days and nights must include one, but no more than one, long-term camp consisting of six consecutive days and five nights of resident camping, approved and under the auspices and standards of the Boy Scouts of America. The balance of the camping must be overnight, weekend, or other short-term camps. Following approval by the Scoutmaster, Scouts are elected to seek membership in the Order by their fellow unit members. A member of the local Chapter of the Takoda Lodge conducts OA elections. The results of the election are made known at Summer Camp. All scouts present at the election may vote on the candidates. To be selected for the OA a Scout must receive at least 50% of the votes cast by all Scouts present. Scouts may vote for as many eligible members as they think deserve the honor. Then, after completing an Ordeal experience, they become members of the Order of the Arrow.

Adult selection is based on the ability to perform the necessary functions to help the Order fulfill its purpose, and is not for recognition. Selected adult Scouters must be an asset to the Order because of demonstrated abilities and provide a positive role model for the youth members of the lodge.

The scouts need to understand that to elect a scout into the OA, they are saying that the election candidate is the “best of the best” in the troop. Just because a scout is eligible to be elected into the OA, doesn’t mean the scouts have to vote for them. Like an Eagle Scout, 80% of Scouts do not make it into the OA. Members of the OA are to be held to a higher standard than other Scouts.

Scholarships. There are various scholarship opportunities to college that are available for Scouts. They are published in the Scouting magazine from time to time. Also, remember that Eagle scouts are favorably considered when applying for a ROTC scholarship.

Religious Emblems. Talk to the Scoutmaster about the Religious emblem award that Scouts can earn. There is a Religious emblem for almost every faith and denomination. The award is a medal and a knot that is sewn over the left pocket of the Scout shirt. Courses are typically administered by someone from your religious institution.

Baden Powell Award. The requirements for earning the Baden Powell award are in the Boy Scout handbook. All Patrols are encouraged to pursue this award.

Service Projects. Senior ranks require participation in approved service projects for varying amounts of time. These projects are to be approved in advance by the Scoutmaster and should benefit the Scout’s church, school, or community, not himself or his immediate family. However, if you have participated in a short-notice service project, tell the Scoutmaster. More than likely it can count towards advancement. The rank of Eagle requires the planning and direction of a major service project.

Summer Camp. Every year our Troops go to a BSA Summer Camp. This is the opportunity to

earn Merit Badges, rank advancement, and have fun with the other Scouts in our Troops. Each summer camp is approximately one week long. There are other High Adventure camps that are available to Scouts that specialize in activities like sailing, canoeing or scuba diving, but for the most part, summer camps are only one week and offer a variety of activities and opportunities to earn Merit Badges that may be difficult to get back home. Prior to summer camp, parents will receive a letter that outlines everything they need to know about summer camp such as mail, items to pack, camp improvements, money, etc.

DID YOU KNOW?

Scouting leadership among students:

A comparison study of the records of scouts and non-scouts in a nation-wide sampling of schools and colleges shows that scouts hold most of the major positions of leadership in the student body. The survey resulted in the following statistics in regard to school offices bearing a large amount of responsibility.

- Of senior class presidents, 89% were scouts.
- Of junior class presidents, 80% were scouts.
- Of football captains, 71% were scouts.
- Of business managers of school publications, 75% were scouts.
- Of student council presidents, 85% were scouts.
- Of school newspaper editors, 88% were scouts.
- Of school yearbook editors, 77% were scouts.
- Of basketball captains, 65% were scouts.

Numbered among the alumni of the Boy Scouts of America are:

- 64% of the Air Force Academy graduates
- 68% of the West Point graduates.
- 70% of the Annapolis graduates.
- 72% of the Rhodes Scholars.
- 85% of the FBI agents.
- 26% of the first 29 astronauts.

Out of 100 youths in Scouting:

- Only rarely will one appear in juvenile court.
- 12 will receive the first church contact through Scouting.

- 5 will receive church religious emblems.
- 1 will enter the clergy due to his Scouting relationships.
- 18 will develop hobbies that will give them a life-long interest.
- 8 will find their future life vocation.
- 1 will use Scout skills to save another's life.
- 1 will credit Scout skills with saving his own life.
- 2 of the 100 will reach the Eagle rank.
- 17 will later become leaders in Scouting and will pass on their skills, inspiration and leadership to countless youth.

SCOUTING WORKS!!!!

APPENDIX 1

WHAT EQUIPMENT A SCOUT NEEDS

The following is the minimum we recommend for new Boy Scouts.

Uniform:

1. Khaki Shirt to include: Council patch, Troop number, red epaulets, neckerchief with Boy Scout slide (provided by Troop). Some Scouts prefer to wear a long sleeve t-shirt or sweatshirt under the short sleeve Scout shirt during the winter. A long sleeve Scout shirt is not a requirement. The new scouts will choose a Patrol name and will get a patrol emblem after that. The Arrow of Light is worn on the bottom of the left shirt pocket. Religious Award knots earned in Cub Scouts may be worn over the left shirt pocket. Participation stars may also be worn over the left shirt pocket (optional).
2. Official BSA Pants/Shorts (optional), or Khaki or denim material, in good condition (no holes or frays).
3. Official Boy Scout Socks (optional), or high non-cotton socks to ward off poison ivy.
4. Official Boy Scout Belt (optional), several types are available. The web belt with brass buckle is the most practical. Otherwise, pretty much any nice belt will do.
5. Official Boy Scout Hat (optional), or any Scout-friendly baseball cap will do.
6. Merit Badge sash. We recommended you the buy the "long" sash and take a tuck at the top. This way you don't have to sew the Merit Badges onto a new sash as your Scout grows.
7. Troop selected neckerchief. Colors vary by Troop.

The Class "A" uniform includes all of the above (except the sash) and is the normal prescribed uniform for all troop meetings during the school year, official Troop activities, and departure for Troop events. For ceremonies, we usually ask the scouts to wear their Merit Badge Sash as well. This would be for events like a Court of Honor, Scout Sunday, leading parades, flag

retirements, etc. The Class "B" uniform consists of the above except the khaki shirt is exchanged for a Troop or other Scout T-shirt or collared shirt. It is worn for informal events and to Troop meetings during the summer months. Our troops strongly encourages wearing the complete Class "A" or "B" uniform as appropriate to all Troop events. When out camping, etc., the kids usually change into personal gear after arrival and check-in.

Equipment: The kids will feel peer pressure to have all kinds of neat, exotic, and often expensive outdoor gear. Here are the initial essentials:

1. Sleeping bag. A cotton rectangular bag will be fine for warm weather camping when the evenings only get down to around 50o or so. A fair number of kids use these at summer camp because they are comfortable and aren't packed and unpacked on a daily basis. However, for cool and cold weather camping, a good mummy style bag with polyester (hollofill, quallofill, etc.) fill rated to at least 20o or lower is needed (\$70-\$200 depending on make and model). Don't go overboard, though. The lower the temperature rating, the heavier and more expensive the bag gets. Also, down is very warm ... when dry, but isn't when it gets wet.
2. Sleeping pad. These come in many styles. Closed cell foam pads are the best at providing insulation from the ground and a comfortable place to sleep. Some kids prefer a 3/4 length pad for weight consideration or they are long enough that it's full-length for them. Slumberjack and Thermarest make self-inflating sleeping pads. These are generally more expensive, heavier, and the inflating valves eventually fail (\$40-\$70). The current pads of choice are Ridgerest (roll-up) (\$12-\$24) and Z-Rest (fold-up)(\$20-\$25). However, for summer camp and warm weather camping out of the car (1st couple of years), any pad will do, particularly if you already have one).
3. Mess kit. Forget the old fold-up kit aluminum kit with a wing nut that always gets lost and those clip together utensils. Get a camp plate and bowl (like from Coleman for \$8) for those nice multi-course camp meals. Get some old utensils from home or buy lexan or sturdy plastic utensils (\$3) - primarily fork and spoon or spork (all good scouts carry a knife, yes?). Consider a 16oz sierra cup (\$5) for those one-pot meals. Consider a small thermal plastic mug also (one that is clear plastic with oz. gradations on the side for \$4). Finally, get a mesh bag (with your name on it) to put it all in to keep it together (\$3). Model paint and nail polish are useful for labeling mess kits and utensils (or anything else) because it does not wash off like "permanent" marker.
4. Water bottle or canteen. If you have to buy a new one, our Troop recommends the 32oz Nalgene wide-mouth bottle (\$6.50). It's nearly unbreakable, has measuring gradations, and a wide mouth for mixing kool-aid that also makes it easy to clean. If you don't have a day or fanny pack, you can get a nylon bottle holder (\$4) that will go on your belt and hold the bottle.
5. Personal flashlight. Most Scouts prefer the 2-AA battery maglight (\$10), but headlamps have gained in popularity. The new LED bulbs also last longer and burn brighter on low batteries than

the old incandescent bulbs.

6. Pocketknife. Any sharp folding pocketknife will do. Make sure you have a way to attach it to your body or belt. Some kids like the added benefits of Swiss army knives and/or multi-tools like Gerbers or Leathermans, but they are expensive. Try to avoid knives made in China, they tend to be cheaper and will sometimes break during use.

7. A means to transport your equipment – either a duffel bag or backpack. You don't need a backpack initially! If and when your Scout gets interested in backpacking, a pack will be necessary. If you decide you really want a pack go to a good outfitter and buy one that fits.

8. Tent. Our Troops have an inventory of Eureka Timberline 4 SQ XT tents to have available for participants in our camping trips. So individual tents are rarely needed.

Cooking gear, lanterns, tarps, etc. are all provided by the Troop Quartermaster. Patrols draw needed gear prior to each event, use it, clean it, and return it afterwards.

See one of the older Scouts or an adult leader if you have equipment questions, we're always willing to "talk gear."

Okay, where do you go to get started? The choices are many, and each has advantages and disadvantages. None of what follows is intended as a specific endorsement of one source or product over another, although we identify recommended items and good deals wherever possible. Members of the Troop have had good luck (and, every now and again, not so good luck) with these sources, their available selections and prices can vary. Your best bet is always to comparison shop. The adult leaders and older Scouts can also provide you the benefit of their experience. Feel free to ask.

AND WHERE TO BUY IT

Scout Uniforms and Official Scout Equipment

Madison National Scout Shop 5846 Manufacturers Drive Madison, WI 53704-6278 (608) 273-1005	A complete selection of Scout uniforms, insignia, publications, accessories, and official outdoor equipment.
Janesville Scout Service Center 2300 East Racine Street Janesville, WI 53545-4340 (608) 756-4669	Carries most Scout uniform items and publications as well as other clothing, and equipment.

Local Outfitters

<p>Gander Mountain 6199 Metro Drive De Forest, WI 53532 (608) 242-9532 www.gandermountain.com</p>	<p>They have camping and hiking gear for everything from the casual outdoor family afternoon to an epic adventure for the most serious back packers.</p>
<p>Fontana 216 Henry Street Madison, WI 53703 608-257-5043 www.fontanasports.com</p>	<p>Wide selection of outdoor equipment, but a little pricey sometimes. Staff knowledge can be spotty.</p>
<p>Dicks Sporting Goods 350 East Towne Mall Madison, WI 53704 608-241-2764 www.dickssportinggoods.com</p>	<p>Well-stocked with quality merchandise, but like the REI, LL Bean, and Fontana, prices tend to be full retail. Watch for sales. Staff knowledge can be spotty, but generally better than average.</p>
<p>Someplace else...</p>	<p>Room for expansion later.</p>
<p>L.L. Bean, Inc. 800-441-5713 www.llbean.com</p>	<p>Online only (at least in Wisconsin). Outstanding quality. Great return policy, reasonable prices. Comparison shop with REI.</p>
<p>Recreational Equipment, Inc. (REI) 7483 W Towne Way Madison, WI 53719 (608) 833-6680 www.rei.com REI Outlet at www.rei-outlet.com</p>	<p>The ultimate outdoor equipment store, and great staff, but compare prices. REI is a co-op. Joining is free, and members get an annual rebate based on what they've spent. Co-op members get rebates on catalog purchases, too. Excellent return policy. Web site has some great outdoor resource entries in addition to good descriptions of merchandise. Also check out their outlet web site!</p>
<p>Sierra Trading Post 5025 Campstool Rd. Cheyenne, WY 82007</p>	<p>The ultimate collection of overstocks, overruns, and discontinued items. You really need to know your product before</p>

800-713-4534 www.sierratradingpost.com	shopping here, but again, look in the stores and then check this and Campmor for a bargain before paying retail.
Military surplus Various local installations	Not sure where this is, or how it works. Just remember going in one and found great deals!
Cabelas Sun Prairie	They have camping and hiking gear for everything from the casual outdoor family afternoon to an epic adventure for the most serious back packers.

Catalogs and Web Sites

BSA Official Catalog P.O. Box 7143 Charlotte, NC 28241-7143 1-800-323-0736 www.scoutstuff.org	A complete selection of mail order Scout uniforms, insignia, publications, accessories, and official outdoor equipment. Phone and fax orders accepted. Get on their mailing list and you get a new catalog every year.
Campmor 810 Rte 17 North Paramus, NJ 07652 1-888-226-7667 www.campmor.com	A Scout favorite when you know what you want. Several catalogs a year. Everything for the camper and backpacker. Competitive prices. Check the "super special deals." Comprehensive web has better illustrations of merchandise than the catalog.