

Boy Scout Troop 95



Troop Handbook

BSA Troop 95

United Methodist Church

Westford, Massachusetts

January, 2015

Scouts, Scouters, Parents, and Friends,

Welcome to Boy Scout Troop 95! Entering the Scouting program can seem a little bit intimidating at the outset for both the Scouts and their families. The already busy family calendar gets assaulted with lots of new entries and you may wonder if it's all worthwhile. I can assure you that it is! You'll soon feel "at home" and your sons will be mastering skills that, a few weeks before, they didn't even know existed. To help ease the transition (and to serve as a reference in the future), we put this guide together to help with your Scouting journey. It will hopefully answer your questions and give you a jump start in Scouting. While it may all seem overwhelming, underlying it all there's lots of wonderful times ahead -- as the founder of Scouting Lord Baden-Powell said Scouting is, "fun with a purpose".

While there's no shortage of information on Scouting (if you put "Boy Scouts" into a search engine you'll come up with over 2.8 million hits), there's so much out there that it's often difficult to know where to begin. Hopefully this guide will not only get you started, but will also serve as a resource to you when questions come up about the program in the years ahead.

If you're reading this handbook for the first time as a new Scout family, I would suggest that you start with the final chapter, "Scoutmaster's Closing Comments," then dive into the opening chapters. Refer to it frequently during your first few months with the troop, as most of the material is designed to give new Scouts a jump start in the Boy Scout program.

Our website (www.westfordtroop95.com) should also be a good source of information for you. As questions have come up over the years more and more material has been added to the website, so check it out as another resource for your Scouting questions.

Much of this information is not original. It is collected from many different Scouting sources. I'm not one for re-inventing the wheel.

No handbook is perfect and I'm always interested in your feedback and suggestions for improvements or possible additions. Your input can make this handbook even better, so please do not hesitate to ask questions, suggest additions/changes and most importantly, GET INVOLVED!

Wishing you the best in your Scouting adventure . . .

Yours in Scouting,

Scot Stewart

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Chapter 1 – An Introduction to Scouting

Where to begin? The stated mission of the Boy Scouts of America is:

“To prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Law.”

To carry out that mission Troop 95 offers our young Scouts a wide variety of activities and opportunities. One of the common misconceptions about the Scouting program is that it’s all about hiking and camping. While these outdoor activities are certainly a central element of Scouting, the overall program involves much more. Our Scouts are given the responsibility to run large portions of their program, giving them invaluable leadership experience and training. Through merit badges they learn a variety of life skills – everything from emergency preparedness to financial management. And, as they earn their initial ranks they learn basic “Scout” skills such as first aid and cooking that will serve them for the rest of their lives.

As each Scout enters Troop 95, he receives his own copy of the *Boy Scout Handbook*. The opening chapters of the *Handbook* serve as an excellent introduction to the Scouting program and are a must read for any new Scout family. We also recommend that you familiarize yourself with our website (westfordtroop95.com) which has lots of information specific to the troop. The chapters of this guide are organized by topic so feel free to jump around and browse to find information about a specific area of interest.

New Scout families should start with Chapter 2, “Getting Started with Troop 95” in their first step in the Scouting journey.

If you have questions, just ask. Our adult leaders and older Scouts have a wealth of outdoor and Scout experience and are more than happy to share it with you.

Chapter 2 - Getting Started with Troop 95

A boy needs very little other than ambition, a positive attitude, and a desire to learn to get started in Scouting. To join the troop, fill out and sign an application and pay the troop registration fee. This includes a subscription to Scouting's magazine for Scouts, *Boys' Life*.

Every boy in the program takes the following oath – ***The Scout Oath*** – and is expected to live its principles in his daily life:

"On my honor I will do my best, to do my duty to God and my country and to obey the Scout Law; to help other people at all times; to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight."

Additionally, each Scout is expected to follow the 12 points of the ***Scout Law***:

"A Scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent."

The Scout Law and Oath are the foundation of the Scouting program. Every Scout in the world takes a similar pledge. The Oath and Law are simple to understand and take the place of endless rules and regulations. Each of our Scouts will recite these as part of earning their first ("Scout") badge.

Your First Days in Troop 95

In Troop 95 we expect our Scouts to be in a complete, proper uniform within two weeks of joining. Please see Chapter 9 for further information about the wearing of the uniform, including the proper placement of patches.

Once he receives his *Boy Scout Handbook* a Scout should complete the pamphlet exercises at the front of the book with a parent (please initial somewhere on the cover when you complete it). This is a requirement for the first ("Scout") badge. Also, going over the other requirements for the Scout badge and reading the first two chapters of the handbook will give a new Scout a jump start on the program. We recommend that parents also read these chapters as they provide a good overview of the program.

The best way to get involved is to simply jump in. Talk to other parents, check out the troop calendar on the website for upcoming activities and sign up for them.

New Scouts should plan, if at all possible, to attend summer camp with the Troop. Summer camp (see Chapter 8 for more information) is a great way to complete advancement requirements and merit badges and make friends with other members of the troop.

Special Notes for Bridging Cub Scout Families

The Boy Scout program differs from Cub Scouts in several significant ways. If you've been actively involved in Cub Scouts you'll immediately notice differences in the way the program is structured. First and foremost, Boy Scouts is "boy led" and we emphasize boy leadership in Troop 95. This means that the Scouts themselves are given much of the responsibility for decision making and carrying out their program. It also means that the Cub Scout approach of "everyone moves at the same pace" no longer applies. Scouts will advance in rank, earn merit badges, and participate in activities at their own pace. They, not the adult leaders, are responsible for their own advancement. While we certainly structure activities to provide advancement opportunities, it is the Scout's responsibility to take those opportunities. This translates into boys advancing at different rates. Some achieve their rank advancement quickly – others go more slowly. There is no "right pace" and boys do not "fall behind" – they should participate at a rate that is comfortable for their circumstances. But keep in mind that less participation translates to slower advancement.

Another way that Boy Scouts differs from Cub Scouts is the concept that boys will take responsibility for their own activities. As our young men grow we give them more and more opportunities to make their own choices and decisions. On campouts this means packing, cooking, cleaning, etc for themselves. They learn by doing and learn from their mistakes. Help your sons help themselves by demonstrating or "making suggestions" but not by doing their work for them.

A Few More Rules of Note

Boy Scouts are not allowed to carry or use knives, hatchets, saws, or other cutting tools until they've received their "Totin' Chip" card following completion of a hands-on safety course. Additionally, Scouts cannot carry any knife with a blade exceeding four inches. Scouts cannot carry matches or build fires until receiving their "Firem'n Chit" certifying completion of a fire safety course. Troop 95 does not allow the use of any electronic games or music players during any outdoor activity, unless otherwise announced per event. Also, although Troop 95 allows some flexibility in the wear of the uniform (see Chapter Nine), we adhere to the BSA guidelines against the wear of camouflage clothing during BSA activities.

A Scout's Responsibilities

Boy Scouts teaches responsibility. A Scout is expected to take responsibility for his own Scouting career – seeking advancement, learning, and leadership. Adult leaders help guide the Scout, but it is up to the Scout himself to contribute to his own advancement and troop leadership. Scouts help their fellow Scouts by being both good leaders and good followers and always follow the 12 points of the Scout Law.

Scout Leaders' Responsibilities

Scout leaders help the Scouts on their Scouting journey – mentoring, demonstrating, and teaching. Leaders ensure a quality, safe, and enjoyable Scouting experience.

Parents' Responsibilities

Without strong parental support, the troop's program will fail. Encourage and help your son in his Boy Scout adventure. As a small troop, we rely heavily on ALL parents to make a contribution toward the troop program, but this need not be a large time commitment. An excellent way to begin is as a member of the troop committee. Please encourage your Scout – his actions will be a reflection of your attitude toward Scouting. Get him to activities on time and work to keep scheduling conflicts to a minimum. Make Scouting a priority!

A Closing Note on Becoming a Boy Scout

Boy Scouts is a program that prepares boys for life as an adult. It teaches leadership, responsibility and integrity while providing opportunities for new experiences and just plain fun. Many former Scouts say that the introduction to their life's profession came through merit badge work during their Scouting years. Rank advancement teaches the importance of pushing yourself and the rewards that come from working toward established goals. A board of review teaches Scouts to present themselves in a professional manner before a group of adults. Camping not only teaches outdoor skills, but also the importance of teamwork and compromise. It reinforces a Scout's confidence in his ability to take care of himself and deal with new situations. Leadership positions in Scouting prepare a Scout for leadership positions later in life. Service projects teach the importance of giving back to the community. And the list goes on. But, also, as in all endeavors of life, what you get out of something is what you put into it. Scouting offers many opportunities, and the Scout must take the initiative to make those opportunities a part of his life.

Welcome to Troop 95 and the world of Scouting. Best wishes for an exciting and rewarding Scouting adventure!!

Chapter 3 – The History of Scouting

The worldwide Scouting movement evolved during the early 1900s through the efforts of several visionary pioneers. With the social upheavals brought on by industrialization as a backdrop it was clear to these pioneers that schools alone were not providing opportunities for young people to channel their energies into productive endeavors outside of their academic studies. In particular, as families moved from the country to cities on a massive scale, opportunities for young people to enjoy the benefits of outdoor activities began to wane. There was a recognized need for something that would give young boys positive opportunities to develop outdoor skills, get together in a spirit of fellowship, and abide by a special code of conduct.

This led to the formation of a variety of youth groups, many with the word "Scout" in their names. For example, Ernest Thompson Seton, an American naturalist, artist, writer, and lecturer, originated a group called the Woodcraft Indians and in 1902 wrote a guidebook for boys in his organization called the Birch Bark Roll. Meanwhile in Britain, Robert Baden-Powell, after returning to his country a hero, following military service in Africa, found boys reading the manual he had written for his regiment on stalking and survival in the wild. Gathering ideas from Seton, America's Daniel Carter Beard, and other Scoutcraft experts, Baden-Powell rewrote his manual as a nonmilitary skill book, which he titled *Scouting for Boys*. The book rapidly gained a wide readership in England and soon became popular in the United States. In 1907, when Baden-Powell held the first campout for Scouts on Brownsea Island off the coast of England, troops were spontaneously springing up in America.

Baden-Powell's early experiment at Brownsea Island took off like wildfire. The first Scout rally, held in 1909 at The Crystal Palace in London, attracted 10,000 boys and a number of girls. Scout troops began springing up by the hundreds and the movement quickly spread to other countries. By 1910, Argentina, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, India, Malaysia, Mexico, the Netherlands, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the United States had Boy Scouts.

The movement formally came to America when a Chicago publisher, Mr. William D. Boyce, learned about Scouting during a trip to England and fashioned a similar program upon his return to the United States. Mr. Boyce was inspired, so the legend goes, to meet with Lord Baden-Powell, when he was assisted by an unknown Scout who led him out of a dense London fog, refusing to take a tip for doing a Good Turn. Immediately after its incorporation on February 8, 1910, the BSA was assisted by officers of the YMCA in organizing community groups to start and maintain a high-quality Scouting program. Those efforts led to the organization of the nation's first Scout camp at Lake George, New York, directed by Ernest Thompson Seton. Thomas Beard, who had established another youth group, the Sons of Daniel Boone (which he later merged with the BSA), also provided assistance. Also on hand for this historic event was James E. West, a lawyer and an advocate of children's rights, who later would become the first professional Chief Scout Executive of the Boy Scouts of America. Seton became the first volunteer national Chief Scout, and Beard, the first national Scout commissioner.

In 1920 the First Scout World Jamboree was held in London, England with over 8,000 Scouts from 34 countries attending. By 1935 membership in the Boy Scouts of America passed the 1 million mark.

Scouting today continues to emphasize the same basic principles and values set forth by the early leaders of the movement. We'll cover those in more detail in the next chapter.

Chapter 4 - Aims and Methods of the Scouting Program

The Scouting program has three specific objectives, commonly referred to as the "Aims of Scouting." They are character development, citizenship training, and personal fitness.

The following eight "methods of Scouting" – each of equal importance – are quoted from the BSA national headquarters website.

- **Ideals.** The ideals of Boy Scouting are spelled out in the Scout Oath, the Scout Law, the Scout motto, and the Scout slogan. The Boy Scout measures himself against these ideals and continually tries to improve. The goals are high, and as he reaches for them, he has some control over what and who he becomes.
- **Patrols.** The patrol method gives Boy Scouts an experience in team building, participating in citizenship, and leadership. It places responsibility on young shoulders and teaches boys how to accept it. The patrol method allows Scouts to interact in small groups where members can easily relate to each other. These small groups determine troop activities through elected representatives.
- **Outdoor Programs.** Boy Scouts is designed to take place outdoors. It is in the outdoor setting that Scouts share responsibilities and learn to live with one another. In the outdoors the skills and activities practiced at troop meetings come alive with purpose. Being close to nature helps Boy Scouts gain an appreciation for the beauty of the world around us. The outdoors is the laboratory in which Boy Scouts learn ecology and practice conservation of nature's resources.
- **Advancement.** Boy Scouts provides a series of surmountable obstacles and steps in overcoming them through the advancement method. The Boy Scout plans his advancement and progresses at his own pace as he meets each challenge. The Boy Scout is rewarded for each achievement, which helps him gain self-confidence. The steps in the advancement system help a Boy Scout grow in self-reliance and in the ability to help others.
- **Associations With Adults.** Boys learn a great deal by watching how adults conduct themselves. Scout leaders can be positive role models for the members of the troop. In many cases a Scoutmaster who is willing to listen to boys, encourage them, and take a sincere interest in them can make a profound difference in their lives.
- **Personal Growth.** As Boy Scouts plan their activities and progress toward their goals, they experience personal growth. The Good Turn concept is a major part of the personal growth method of Boy Scouting. Boys grow as they participate in community service projects and do Good Turns for others. Probably no device is as successful in developing a basis for personal growth as the daily Good Turn. The religious emblems program also is a large part of the personal growth method. Frequent personal conferences with his Scoutmaster help each Boy Scout to determine his growth toward Scouting's aims.
- **Leadership Development.** The Boy Scout program encourages boys to learn and practice leadership skills. Every Boy Scout has the opportunity to participate in both shared and total leadership situations. Understanding the concepts of leadership helps a boy accept the leadership role of others and guides him toward the citizenship aim of Scouting.

□ Uniform. The uniform makes the Boy Scout troop visible as a force for good and creates a positive youth image in the community. Boy Scouting is an action program, and wearing the uniform is an action that shows each Boy Scout's commitment to the aims and purposes of Scouting. The uniform gives the Boy Scout identity in a world brotherhood of youth who believe in the same ideals. The uniform is practical attire for Boy Scout activities and provides a way for Boy Scouts to wear the badges that show what they have accomplished.

Chapter 5 - Troop Organization

Scout Organization and Leadership

One of the key elements of the Boy Scouting program is the emphasis on youth leadership. Boy Scout leaders are not just leaders in name only, but are responsible for the operation of the troop. There are few organizations that afford boys the leadership opportunities that they will have in Scouting. The basic role of adults in a Scout troop is to serve as mentors for the Scout leaders – to train them and guide them toward effective leadership – and to make sure that the program is carried out safely in accordance with Boy Scout directives. It is, however, up to the boys themselves to run the troop and carry out the program.

To do this, the troop has a standard Boy Scout organizational structure. At the top is the senior patrol leader (SPL) who is the troop's senior boy leader. The SPL is elected by the troop. He appoints an assistant(s), the assistant senior patrol leader (ASPL), that helps him carry out his duties and fills in when the SPL is absent.

The boys in the troop are organized into patrols – groups of 4-8 boys that function as a team in carrying out the Scouting program. Each patrol elects a patrol leader (PL), who, in turn, appoints an assistant to help him carry out his duties.

Every month, the SPL, ASPL, and patrol leaders meet in a group called the “patrol leaders’ council” to set the troop plan for the upcoming month and to discuss any other topics of interest. In Troop 95, our PLC normally meets during the first troop meeting of the month.

A summary of troop leadership positions is as follows:

- Senior patrol leader** - top Scout leader in the troop. He runs troop meetings, events, activities, and the annual program planning conference. He is responsible for carrying out the troop program, assigning specific tasks to Scouts, leading the patrol leaders' council and, in consultation with the Scoutmaster, appointing other junior leaders.
- Assistant senior patrol leader** - fills in for senior patrol leader in his absence. He is also responsible for training and giving direction to other troop leaders
- Troop Historian** - collects and maintains troop historical documentation
- Librarian** - keeps troop books, merit badge pamphlets, magazines, and other documents for use by members of the troop.
- Instructor** – responsible for teaching one or more skill areas to troop members; considered an expert in his area.
- Chaplain Aide** – responsible for the “Scout’s Own Service” at troop campouts and promoting the religious emblem program.

- Junior Assistant Scoutmaster** - a Scout 16 or older who works with the Scoutmaster and assistant Scoutmaster to provide support to Scout leaders.
- Patrol leader** - Leads his patrol and represents them on the patrol leaders' council.
- Assistant patrol leader** - fills in for the patrol leader in his absence.
- Troop guide** - advisor and guide to new Scouts.
- Den chief** - works with a Cub Scout den as a guide.
- Quartermaster** - responsible for troop supplies and equipment.
- Scribe** - the troop secretary.
- Bugler** – plays bugle calls for reveille, taps and any other appropriate occasion.
- Leave No Trace Trainer** – Teaches the principles of “Leave no Trace” camping and ensure they are carried out on campouts
- Troop Webmaster** – provides inputs and updates to the troop website

The Chartered Organization

Our troop is sponsored by the United Methodist Church of Westford, Massachusetts. The church provides us with a place to meet and other assistance as needed. Our liaison to the church is the chartered organization representative. It should be noted that, while we are sponsored by the United Methodist Church of Westford, Troop 95 is open to boys and families of all religious backgrounds.

Adult Organization and Leadership

While Scouting is touted as a “boy led” organization and, as mentioned above, it affords tremendous opportunities to boy leaders, the overall responsibility for making sure the Scouting program succeeds clearly rests with adult leadership. Within the troop, there are two major adult leadership groups.

The Troop Committee

The troop committee is the troop’s “Board of Directors.” The function of the committee is to support the overall program, not to operate it. The committee is headed up by a chairman and is made up primarily of parents of the troop’s Scouts. Other adults with an interest in Scouting can also be committee members. Duties of the troop committee include the following:

- Ensure that quality adult leadership is recruited and trained, and select and approve the troop's Scoutmaster and assistant Scoutmasters.
- Ensure the troop has an active program that meets the needs of the Scouts, parents, and complies with BSA standards.
- Interface with the Scoutmaster on policies relating to Boy Scouting, the troop and the chartered organization.
- Serve as an interface with our chartered organization, Westford's United Methodist Church, through the chartered organization representative .
- Support leaders in carrying out the troop's program.
- Ensure finances are available to support a quality Scouting program.
- The troop treasurer, a committee member, is responsible for finances – keeping track of funds and making disbursements in line with the approved budget plan.
- Obtain, maintain, and properly care for troop property.
- Serve on boards of review and courts of honor.
- Aid the Scoutmaster in working with individual boys and problems that may affect the overall troop program.
- Establish and approve the annual activity schedule.
- Recruit and appoint merit badge counselors.
- Help with the troop's annual Luminary Sale fundraiser and with the council's annual "Friends of Scouting" fund raising campaign.

Scoutmasters and Assistant Scoutmasters

While the troop committee supports the troop program, it does not operate it. That responsibility falls to the Scoutmaster (SM) and assistant Scoutmasters (ASMs). They train and guide the boy leaders to run the troop and ensure that the troop's program is carried out in an effective and safe manner. The SM and ASMs are active participants in troop meetings and the outdoor program and must work closely with all of the troop's Scouts to teach new skills, and with the troop's Scout leadership to ensure their continued development as leaders.

BSA Organization

Troop 95 is not alone in the BSA world. Above the troop level, there is an extensive BSA organization that supports the Scouting program. While a detailed summary is well beyond this quick overview, the basic structure above the troop is as follows:

West Wind District

The District comprises troops from the local area including Andover, Lawrence, Lowell, Billerica, Chelmsford, Dracut, Dunstable, Westford, Willmington, Tewksbury and Tyngsborough. The district sponsors “Roundtable” meetings for adult leaders on the first Thursday of each month where the latest District news is conveyed and there is typically a series of presentations on various scouting topics, such as outing ideas, Summer Camp information or Unit registrations and renewals. The District also sponsors “camporees” – weekend campouts involving all district troops – in the spring, winter and fall. The West Wind District is part of the:

Yankee Clipper Council

In our area, the council serves Northeast Massachusetts, the Merrimack Valley and Southeast New Hampshire. The council is headquartered at Yankee Clipper Council, BSA, 36 Amesbury Rd, Haverhill, Massachusetts. The council is part of the:

Boy Scouts of America National Council

Over three hundred local councils report to national headquarters in Irving, Texas. The national council sets standards and policies for the BSA. The national headquarters sponsors the National Jamboree (held every 4 years), runs the National High Adventure Camps, publishes Scouting books and magazines, and takes care of the other myriad responsibilities required to keep the program functioning. It also represents the US at the:

World Organization of Scouting Movements

The WOSM is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, and brings together Scouting movements from over 200 countries and territories around the world. It sponsors the International Scout Centre at Kandersteg, Switzerland and the World Jamboree, held every four years. The last World Jamboree was held in 2011 in Rinkaby, Sweden.

Chapter 6 – Meetings

Troop 95 has its regular troop meetings on Thursday evenings from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. in the lower hall of Westford's United Methodist Church. Please make every effort to arrive a few minutes early as late arrivals tend to disrupt the opening of the meeting.

Most meetings include a gathering activity or game to keep Scouts active and engaged prior to the start of the Troop meeting.

Meetings include a flag ceremony and announcements followed by the program for the evening. Program topics range from hands-on learning and demonstrations to guest speakers. We routinely break into patrols to learn and practice skills and to plan for upcoming campouts and activities. Regular meetings end with a closing ceremony consisting of announcements, reciting the Scout Oath and Scout Law and reminders followed by a "Scoutmaster Minute".

Duty Patrol

Each month a "duty patrol" is appointed by the patrol leaders' council to help with the meeting. Members of the duty patrol should arrive at least 25 minutes before the start of the meeting to prepare the flags for the opening ceremony and to arrange chairs and tables. Generally a different patrol cleans up after the meeting and makes sure all tables and chairs have been returned to their original places.

The flag ceremony is another responsibility of the duty patrol. We begin each meeting by paying respect to the national colors by reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Advancement Night

The first meeting following an outing is usually designated as an "advancement night." No formal program is planned and Scouts work on advancement and merit badge related activities. This is an excellent time to schedule Scoutmaster Conferences and boards of review (read more about these in the "Advancement" section of this guide). Adult leaders are available on advancement nights specifically to assist with requirement reviews. The monthly patrol leaders' council(PLC) meeting is normally held on advancement night.

Please note that Scouts should NOT expect to have requirements signed off during regular meetings (except, of course, advancement nights) unless they've made prior arrangements with the adult leaders. We specifically designate advancement nights for this purpose so as not to disrupt the flow of our regular meetings. Adult leaders are also generally available before or after meetings for this purpose.

Courts of Honor

Three times a year (September, February, and June) the troop holds a court of honor to recognize advancement, awards, and merit badges. This is a formal ceremony and all family members are cordially invited to attend and show support for the troop and Scouts. Families are asked to bring a food or drink item to share at a social following the formal part of the ceremony.

Other Items of Interest Related to Meetings

- Unless otherwise indicated, Scouts are expected to be in Class A uniform for all troop meetings. See Chapter 9 – Uniforms for more information on uniforms.

- Until a Scout has achieved First Class rank, he should always bring his *Boy Scout Handbook* to every meeting so that requirements can be signed off as they're completed. The meeting program for newer Scouts often includes specific instruction on advancement skills.

Meeting Cancellations

If meetings are cancelled due to inclement weather we'll issue a troop wide e-mail. We follow the Westford school system cancellation policy and calendar, if there is no school, there is no Troop meeting. Note though, that for any early release days that fall on a Thursday, we will still hold a troop meeting.

Chapter 7 - Camping and Campouts

A week of camp life is worth six months of theoretical teaching in the meeting room.

– Lord Robert Baden-Powell

The outdoor program is at the heart of Scouting. Many of the requirements for advancement in Boy Scouts relate directly to camping. In Troop 95 we schedule an outdoor activity, generally a campout, for every month and encourage maximum participation on the part of our Scouts. On campouts the boys not only learn about camping skills and nature, they also learn about cooperation, teamwork, and leadership.

Types of Campouts

- Car Camping – Troop 95’s most common type of camping – we park close to the campsite and everything can be easily carried from the car.
- Backpacking – A camper carries his gear – all of it – on his back – it’s essential to pack only what you need.
- Cabin Camping – We’ll stay in a cabin. Scouts don’t need tents, but will need a sleeping bag.
- Summer Camp – Scouts will stay in large, 2 person tents and sleep on cots with mosquito netting.

Before the Campout

- Sign up early. At troop meetings we have a sign-up roster for upcoming activities and we ask that both boys and adults sign up if they think they’ll be participating. For planning purposes, it really helps to sign up well in advance, but generally the last chance to sign up for a weekend campout is two meetings before the campout. At that time, please turn in:
 - Registration fee: This varies from outing to outing and is noted on the sign-up sheet.
 - Permission slip: Permission slips can be downloaded from the website or will be e-mailed to the Troop prior to the event.
- Flexibility is important to Troop 95 – if you’re not sure if you can participate because of other commitments (e.g. changing sports schedules), let us know – we try to accommodate all schedules. But, while we are flexible, there’s a point of diminishing returns for Scouts that can only participate in portions of an activity due to outside commitments. We ask that all Scouts who are participating in an outing stay until the outing has ended. It is not fair nor respectful to fellow Scouts and Adult Leaders to leave an outing early, resulting in the final packing and clean-up to those who remain. It is strongly suggested to **MAKE SCOUTING THE PRIORITY**.
- Use the camping checklist! (available on the website) Even seasoned campers should use a checklist to make sure nothing is forgotten. Parents – *resist the urge to pack for your son*. He has the list – give him guidance, but let him do the packing.

- If you need equipment (e.g. tent), let the quartermaster know the meeting before the campout. You can check out the equipment at that time. It's always a good idea to make sure your gear is ready to go and all parts are included with your equipment (you would not want to arrive at a campsite only to discover that there are no poles packed with your tent).
- Plan your activities – many requirements for rank advancement or merit badges can only be performed on a campout. Scouts should coordinate in advance with troop leadership to have these signed off and work with the adult leaders and senior Scouts to make it happen.
- However you pack – using a backpack or a duffel – each Scout or adult should be able to carry his own gear in a single trip
- Food!
 - Each patrol plans its own menu for a campout
 - Scouts are encouraged to try new recipes. There are plenty of camping cookbooks in the troop library, and recipes in the *Scout Handbook*.
 - One patrol member will be designated to purchase the food (referred to as the Grubmaster) and will have a budget based on the number of Scouts and meals to be cooked.
 - If you're the parent of the food purchaser, provide guidance but let the Scout do the planning, selection and purchase.
 - Submit receipts to the troop treasurer for reimbursement.
- Camping no-no's – **no electronic entertainment!** We're out to enjoy nature, after all. Electronic games, mp3 players, cell phones, etc. are OK for the ride, but are to be put away or left in the vehicle when we get to the campsite.
- Most common problems
 - Forgetting essential equipment items (not using the checklist).
 - Not having quick access to rain gear (don't want to have to completely tear apart your camping gear to find the poncho while you're standing in the pouring rain).
 - Not having a flashlight or headlamp available – it's dark at night and, if you don't know where your flashlight is, you'll need a flashlight to find it.
 - Getting wet . . . and cold. Cotton retains moisture and draws heat from the body. It is not a particularly good thing to wear while camping.
 - Drink water – the most common medical problem with Scouts is dehydration.

During the Campout

- Scouts should pay special attention to completing advancement and merit badge requirements. A number of these requirements can only be completed while camping. It's a Scout's responsibility to get these completed and go over them with an adult leader.
- If you're an adult and you'd like to come camping with us, by all means do so! But first, please read the "What Adults do on Campouts" topic later in this chapter.

- No food in tents – ever. We camp outdoors. Critters live there. They get hungry. They smell food. They will claw their way into tents. This is not a good thing.

After the Campout

- Dry your gear – tents should be aired out to make sure they're completely dry. Even a small amount of moisture will lead to mildew and ruin the tent.
- Other gear needs to be dried as well.
- Clean your gear, make sure it's ready for the next campout and pack it away properly.
- Replenish any supplies you've used so you're ready for next time.
- Turn in any troop gear that you've checked out from the quartermaster; make sure it's clean, complete, and ready for the next Scout that checks it out. If you take any gear home to clean or dry it out, please return it at the **next** meeting. Troop gear that's put away in a "safe place" disappears from circulation and isn't available to others.

Gearing up – Equipment for Camping

Following is an overview of camping equipment that will be needed as a Scout. It should be noted that a *huge* amount of detailed information about camping gear is available in books, magazines, and on the internet, much of it related to personal preferences.

Getting Started With Camping

Getting started in camping can be somewhat intimidating for those who have not done it, or not done it recently. There is lots of equipment on the market and there are plenty of opinions as to what is and isn't necessary. Following are some suggestions for deciding what you really need when you're first starting out.

Troop Provided Equipment

The troop provides "common" equipment on a campout. This includes: cooking gear, stoves, first aid kit, dining fly, lanterns, saws & hatchets, water jugs, and miscellaneous tools. Scouts are not expected to pack this gear with their own equipment and there's no need to ever buy any of it. In Troop 95, Scouts generally have their own tents, however, we have a few tents that Scouts are welcome to borrow before making a decision on a purchase. Do not rush into a tent purchase – use a troop tent until you're certain of the type and style you'd like to invest in.

Personal Equipment Items and Recommendations

Backpacks

A backpack is not absolutely necessary unless we are actually doing backpack camping. Most of Troop 95's camping is "car camping" meaning that we camp close to where we park the cars. A duffel bag with handles is more than adequate for car camping.

Sleeping Gear

- Sleeping bags come in all shapes, sizes, and price ranges. For general use, a bag with synthetic fill (such as "Hollofil") that is rated at 20 degrees will suffice. Down filled is lighter and, therefore, generally preferable for backpacking (but down is more expensive and there are a number of considerations when buying a down filled sleeping bag – all down filled sleeping bags are not created equal)
- Sleeping pads. Keep in mind that you need to insulate yourself from the ground – a pad serves that purpose, as well as keeping you comfortable. There are two basic types (please don't bother with blow up air mattresses) – foam pads, or self-inflating (such as Thermarest). Either will suffice. The self-inflating pads tend to be more comfortable (comfort, however, is very subjective), but are also more expensive.
- Pillow. Pillows are a matter of personal preference – There are inflatable pillows, backpacking pillows, or other small pillows. Some find that a rolled up jacket or sweater works just fine.

Things to Wear

What to wear is a function of the weather – how hot, how cold, or how wet. But keep a few things in mind:

- Rain gear – **It will rain – be prepared.** A good quality poncho is probably the best all around rain gear. Do not buy a plastic rain suit – they don't breathe and are miserable to wear. There are a number of high quality rain jackets and pants that do breathe (made out of fabrics such as gore-tex). These are great but tend to be very expensive and most boys will outgrow them long before they've gotten their (or their parent's) money's worth from them.
- Clothing – The key to comfortable camping is staying dry and warm. Cotton clothing is not the way to make that happen. Cotton (such as blue jeans) gets wet and stays wet, and when it's wet the wearer gets cold and stays cold. Cotton T shirts may be OK for camping when it's warm and dry, but be prepared for other weather. In warm weather, synthetics will wick moisture away from the body whether it comes from sweat or rain, and helps maintain a reasonable comfort level. For cooler weather, layering is the key . . . layers of clothing that can be put on or taken off as needed. Synthetic or wool fabrics insulate even when wet and are strongly recommended.

Footwear

Keeping your feet dry and comfortable are absolute musts when camping. For car camping, well-fitted sneakers should suffice, but bring an extra pair along as they do get wet (boys are attracted to water and can generally find some to step in – even in a desert. Also keep in mind that heavy dew can get shoes just as wet as a heavy rain). Use hiking socks that wick moisture away from the feet. For hiking, boots are a necessity. Make sure they are high quality, fit well (when wearing thick hiking socks) and are broken in *before* going on a long hike.

Toiletries

Keep it simple. For a weekend campout all the typical Scout needs is a toothbrush, toothpaste, camp soap, and a small towel. A Scout can pack more, but it won't get used. Camping stores sell small camp towels which are lightweight, hold lots of moisture, and dry easily – nice, but certainly not a necessity.

Cooking Gear

As stated above, the troop will provide the cooking gear – the Scout will need his "eating gear" also known as a mess kit, consisting of a bowl, a cup, and some utensils. A rinse bag is a nylon mesh bag that comes in handy for rinsing and drying dishes.

Other Gear

- Scout knife – very handy, but no need to buy a Swiss Army Knife with 50 gadgets – a knife with a couple blades is really all the new Scout needs. Brightly colored is better. They routinely get dropped and a camouflage design on a knife will do precisely what it was designed to do – remain camouflaged.
- Compass – Go for the basics – remember, the basic function of a compass is to point north – until you're ready to do *a lot* of orienteering, about \$10 should buy a basic, quality compass.
- Sunglasses – If you get them, make sure they have UV protection – cheap sunglasses without UV protection are worse than no sunglasses at all
- Emergency whistle – valuable to have if you mistakenly get separated from the group – nothing fancy
- Rope – A small amount of nylon cord comes in handy for repairs, clotheslines, tent guys, etc.
- Flashlight – small, inexpensive, and brightly colored – and always bring extra batteries. Don't buy the huge monsters that take 10 D-cells – they're way too big and heavy. The cost of LED flashlights has fallen to the point that they are good choices for the new Scout – they're inexpensive and last a long time on a single set of batteries. Also, a very handy specialized flashlight is one that is fitted with a headband, called a headlamp – you can wear it on your head, freeing both hands to work on a task.
- Personal first aid kit – The troop will bring a large first aid kit on any campout. A new Scout should prepare a personal first aid kit (requirement 6b for the Second Class rank) and bring it on all campouts and hikes. For further information refer to the *Boy Scout Handbook*.
- Canteen or water bottle – In actuality, the containers that bottled water comes in will be sufficient for a new Scout. But, if you really want to buy a water bottle, buy a wide mouth one. They're easier to clean, easier to fill, and easier for adding ice. Most Scouts have the one liter, wide mouth Nalgene water bottles. They come in a variety of colors which is, of course, helpful in identifying your water bottle from the other 25 that are floating around a campsite. There are containers that will hold a water bottle and attach to belts or backpacks. Very few people use traditional canteens any more. In recent years there has been a lot written about Bisphenol A (BPA) plastics used to make water bottles. Whether or not you believe there's a health threat there are plenty of inexpensive BPA-free water bottles on the market now. Better safe than sorry.
- Personal chair – a personal chair or stool can come in handy on campouts – but keep it small and lightweight. Most of our Scouts have a canvas folding chair to take along on car camping trips. A

fold-up three legged stool works well also and won't require a separate trip to haul it to and from the car.

Hopefully this will help jump start the camping experience. As a Scout becomes more adept at camping, he'll have a better sense for what he needs and can make more informed decisions about purchasing (or not purchasing) camping gear.

Closing Comments on Camping Gear

- For things that a Scout will not outgrow and is not likely to readily lose (such as a tent), it generally pays to go with higher quality the first time.
- Troop 95 has quite a bit of gear available for checkout. Feel free to use it while gaining the experience to know what you *really* need. (But please bring it back when you're finished with it!)
- A Scout should put his name on all personal gear with indelible marker or an engraving pen – despite our best efforts, things do get mixed up and this helps to sort things out.

What Adults Do On Campouts

We absolutely encourage participation on the part of parents on Troop 95 campouts, but for those new to Boy Scouting there are some guidelines that we ask that you follow. While there are exceptions, these guidelines are in effect on most outings.

The Adult Leader

If you come on a campout (and, again, we strongly encourage this!!), you do so in the role of an adult leader. You are expected to serve in that capacity, helping all Scouts as a troop leader. You are not there to serve as a personal assistant for your own son. In Boy Scouting, the primary job of the adult leaders is to ensure that the activity is safe and to assist the boys in carrying out *their* activities. The underlying principle is to encourage the boys and provide guidance, but NOT to do their work for them. Remember, we're helping them to learn self-sufficiency and how to work on their own. They won't learn if we do things for them. That's not to say that adults don't pitch in – but it is important to let the boys learn by doing and let the boy leaders organize and carry out their activities. The general rule is: if a Scout can do it himself, then let him do it. Important note: All adults participating in youth activities **must** have current BSA Youth Protection Training. There are no exceptions to this policy.

The Adult Patrol

In Troop 95 each patrol sets up its own campsite and plans its own menu. The adults are no different. We form our own patrol and camp together, apart from the boys' patrols. In general, we do not mix our tents with those of the boys nor do we eat as members of their patrols.

Adult Meals

We generally plan and cook our own meals, separate from the boys. We do this for two main reasons. First, it sets a good example for planning and demonstrates at least one "proper" way to plan and cook meals. Also, we tend to try meals that are a little more sophisticated than standard Scout fare,

which also tends to set an example and motivate the Scouts to try something new and different the next time out. On many occasions, something that the adults tried on one campout shows up on the Scout menu on a subsequent campout.

Adult/Scout Tenting

BSA youth protection policies forbid an adult and boy sharing the same tent unless father and son. That having been said, with rare exceptions, we ask that fathers not share a tent with their sons. As mentioned above, adults are members of a separate patrol and each patrol sets up its tents together under guidance of the patrol leader or his designee.

Adult Participation in Evening Campfires

It is strongly encouraged for all adults attending outings to participate in the evening campfire activities. Singing and any audience participation required for the songs and skits that Scouts have prepared and are performing sets a positive example for the Scouts. Campfire activities are a core activity in Scouting that help develop self-confidence and being comfortable in front of a crowd. These are skills that Scouts can use throughout life, but can be quickly discouraged by the lack of adult participation. It also is just plain fun!!

Tobacco/Alcohol Use by Adults

No alcohol will be consumed on Scouting activities. Smoking by adults is prohibited while Scouts are in the same vehicle. At other times adults who use tobacco products must do so discretely and out of sight of the Scouts.

Chapter 8 – Summer Camp

Each year we schedule a week of summer camp together as a troop. This is “traditional” BSA summer camp. As scouts grow and mature they may seek “high adventure” camps and Troop 95 will form crews for high adventure camps as often as possible.

Traditional Summer Camp

Every Scout should participate in the troop’s annual summer camp. It’s a great way to meet new Scouts, get to better know the Scouts in our own troop, and develop new skills. We select camps that cater to the needs of all Scouts, whether they’re new to the program, or “seasoned veterans.” New Scouts will typically be involved in a program that specifically targets advancement requirements through the First Class rank and older Scouts can earn a wide variety of merit badges. Most camps also have a special program for older Scouts, such as the Challenging Outdoor Program Experience (COPE), that includes team building exercises, climbing, rappelling, and other special activities. (Scouts must normally be 13 years old and have the First Class rank to participate in COPE). For “traditional” summer camp, we attend Wah-Tut-Ca Scout Camp on Northwood Lake in Northwood, NH. The dates are typically week 4, which usually falls on the last week in July, often spanning into the first few days of August.

High Adventure Camp

Troop 95 strives to grow Scouts with the rank requirements and experience to participate in any of the BSA national high adventure camps. These camps offer challenging outdoor activities targeted at more experienced Scouts. Because the activities can be particularly rigorous (a trek at the Philmont Scout Reservation can involve over 100 miles of hiking through the mountains of New Mexico, for example) these camps typically specify minimum age limits (13-14) and rank (First Class) requirements for attendees. Scheduling is driven, in part, by the availability of slots that are oftentimes determined by lottery. A few of the BSA national high adventure camps are Philmont (New Mexico), Northern Tier (Minnesota/Ontario, Canada), Sea Base (Florida Keys + Bahamas) and Summit Bechtel Reserve (West Virginia). A Scout joining Troop 95 will hopefully have the opportunity to attend a choice of these camps during his time as a Scout with our troop.

Chapter 9 – Uniforms

“The uniform makes the Boy Scout troop visible as a force for good and creates a positive youth image in the community. Boy Scouting is an action program, and wearing the uniform is an action that shows each Boy Scout’s commitment to the aims and purposes of Scouting. The uniform gives the Boy Scout identity in a world brotherhood of youth who believe in the same ideals.”

- extracted from the “methods of Scouting” from the Boy Scout national website

“The uniform makes for brotherhood, since when universally adopted it covers up all differences of class and country.”

- Sir Robert Baden-Powell

Here in Troop 95 we expect our Scouts to properly wear the uniform at meetings and activities. It is important for Scouts to take pride in the way they look personally, and to understand that, as they wear the uniform, they reflect the ideals of Scouting to the community as a whole.

The Boy Scouts publish a “uniform guide” that has rules for placement of lesser known insignia, but the placement of most insignia is listed on the inside front and back covers of your *Boy Scout Handbook*. There is also a uniform inspection checklist that gives detailed information on insignia placement.

Types of Uniforms

- Official Field Uniform (also called the “Class A uniform”)
 - Consists of:
 - Tan Scout shirt with all patches in place; green epaulets on shoulder tabs
 - Scout pants (Troop 95 option: khaki pants or blue jeans)
 - Scout belt and socks
 - Neckerchief and slide
 - Scout hat (Optional in Troop 95)
 - The Official Field Uniform should be worn to all troop meetings
 - Troop 95 Scouts travel to and from campouts and other events in the Official Field Uniform.
 - Tours and visits are normally conducted in an Official Field Uniform
- Activity or Utility uniform (also called the “Class B uniform”)
 - Consists of:
 - Scout pants (Troop 95 option: khaki pants or blue jeans)
 - Other Scout shirt (t-shirt, outdoor shirt, hooded sweatshirt, etc.)
 - Scout belt and socks
 - Scout hat
 - Activity uniforms are normally worn when camping or other outdoor or sports activities
- Other uniform info:

- The wearing of camouflage or military style apparel as part of the uniform is prohibited by BSA policy.
- A merit badge sash is normally worn at courts of honor or boards of review only; it is not tucked into the belt.
- A Scout that is a member of the Order of the Arrow can only wear the OA sash at official OA functions or while performing OA duties.

Where to Get Uniforms

Scout Class A uniforms and uniform items can be purchased at:

- The Scout Shop in North Andover (1600 Osgood St, North Andover, MA 01845)
- The New England Scout Shop (1980 Lunenburg Rd, Lancaster, MA 01523)
- The Woburn Scout Shop (600 W Cummings Park, Woburn, MA 01801)
- Online from the BSA Supply Division www.scoutstuff.org

Scout Class B uniform shirts can also be purchased at the locations noted above for BSA T-shirts and outdoor shirts. Class B uniform shirts with the Troop 95 logo are periodically ordered through the troop as is practical for the number of Scouts wishing to purchase them.

Chapter 10 – Advancement

What it is, how it works, and expectations of the Scout

Advancement through the ranks is one of the goals of Scouting. It teaches our Scouts to work toward a goal and develop a plan to achieve that goal. Along the way Scouts gain confidence in themselves as they learn and apply new skills. Each rank has an associated list of requirements, each with increasing challenge to the one before it.

The requirements for each rank are listed in the *Boy Scout Handbook* which also has a chart of requirements that are initialed off by adult leaders as the Scout demonstrates completion of that requirement.

Scouting Ranks

The first badge, Scout, introduces the new Scout to the Scouting program – teaching fundamentals such as the meaning of the Scout sign, law, and oath. Upon joining the troop, the Scout should immediately work toward completion of these requirements.

The first three ranks, that of Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class, emphasize “Scout” skills – basic skills that each Scout is expected to know and master – such things as outdoor skills, nature, first aid, and safety. The requirements for each of these can be worked on simultaneously. A Scout can complete first aid requirements, for example, for all three ranks at the same time. A Scout should set the goal of achieving First Class rank by the end of his first year in the troop.

The higher ranks, Star, Life, and Eagle are achieved primarily through earning merit badges. Each rank has a requirement for a number of merit badges, some of which must come from the “Eagle required” group. This group of 13 merit badges emphasizes citizenship, outdoor, and emergency preparedness skills. All of these must be completed before becoming an Eagle Scout. Eagle required merit badges are: Camping, Citizenship in the Community, Citizenship in the Nation, Citizenship in the World, Communications, Environmental Science, Family Life, First Aid, Personal Fitness, Personal Management, Emergency Preparedness OR Lifesaving, Cycling OR Hiking OR Swimming and Cooking.

Troop Leadership

The higher ranks (Star, Life, and Eagle) have leadership requirements which specify that Scouts must serve in troop leadership positions before advancing in rank. This is far more than a “checklist item” as the “boy led troop” relies on Scout leaders to run the troop. If Scout leaders are not carrying out their responsibilities, the overall program of the troop as a whole will suffer. Troop 95 places a great deal of emphasis on boy leadership and provides training for each leadership position. A complete listing of troop leadership positions is contained in Chapter 5. Since you can’t be an effective leader if you’re absent from meetings or activities, Scouts are expected to attend at least 80% of the meetings and participate in at least 75% of activities during their tenure as troop leaders. Elections for the positions of Senior Patrol Leader (SPL) and the Patrol Leaders of each patrol are typically held in March. The remaining leadership positions are appointed by the SPL and will include a conference with the Scoutmaster to understand the commitment for the position. Detailed information and procedures for becoming a troop leader are announced in the weeks leading up to the

elections, however, boys that are looking to fill a leadership role in the troop should realize that leadership is an ongoing learning experience and should always be preparing themselves for a leadership role.

Completing Advancement Requirements

Advancement is a part of Scouting. Each Scout is expected to advance at least through the rank of First Class as advancing through Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class involves learning the important “Scout” skills that are the bedrock of Scouting. The following are specific procedures or tips for completing requirements:

The Scout is expected to take the initiative to learn the background on a particular requirement and demonstrate that knowledge to an adult leader. The requirement is specific and the expectations are no more or less than listed. “Demonstrate” means just that – the Scout must actually perform the action. In Troop 95, adult leaders sign advancement requirements. Also, please note that unlike in Cub Scouts, parents do not sign off on advancement requirements. Scouts are expected to be proactive in lining up any required support to work on advancement.

Many advancement requirements can only be completed in conjunction with a campout. It is important that Scouts plan in advance to work on those requirements during a campout. If, for example, the requirement is to purchase food for the campout, the Scout must be assigned the duty during the planning meeting leading up to the campout. Scouts should ask for assistance if they have any questions about a requirement. The background material for all requirements through First Class is in the *Boy Scout Handbook*. Scouts should read the book in conjunction with their advancement.

When all requirements for a rank have been completed, the Scout should schedule, in the following order, a Scoutmaster conference then a board of review.

Scoutmaster Conference

The Scoutmaster conference should be scheduled directly with the Scoutmaster. (Note that through the rank of First Class, a Scoutmaster conference can be conducted by an Assistant Scoutmaster). For the ranks of Star, Life, and Eagle, only the Scoutmaster can sign off this requirement. Scoutmaster conferences are normally conducted during a meeting, campout, or the time directly before or after a meeting. Keep in mind that scheduling in advance is important, as the overall program for a meeting will not normally be modified simply to accommodate a last minute conference. The Scoutmaster conference has no set agenda, but generally covers a review of the rank requirements (although this is NOT a retest) and an overview of a Scout’s progress, his opinions and comments about the troop and Scouting program, and a plan for achieving the next rank.

Board of Review

Finally it’s time for the board of review. A Scout should schedule a board of review directly through the advancement chairperson. The primary purpose of a board of review is to review a Scout’s advancement record and pass him to his next rank, or, in rare cases, to counsel a Scout who has not been advancing. The board process is an important part of the Boy Scout experience and benefits both the troop and the Scout. It’s an important way for the troop committee to gain feedback on troop activities, as Scouts are encouraged to let the board know what he likes and dislikes about the troop, what ideas he has for activities, etc. It’s also an excellent opportunity for a Scout to gain experience

in the interview process – a skill which will come in handy when job hunting a few years down the road. With this in mind, the troop committee has established some guidelines to help Scouts prepare for a board of review.

- Wear the complete uniform. When interviewing for a job, a person is expected to be appropriately dressed. This is no different. The appropriate dress for a Boy Scout board of review is the Official Boy Scout Field (Class A) Uniform in accordance with troop policies. The Board of Review will generally turn away a Scout that is not in proper uniform and ask him to reschedule his board for a later time.
- A Scout should always bring his *Boy Scout Handbook* to a board of review showing all requirements for the rank completed. Also bring any blue merit badge completion cards that relate to the rank, if they have not yet been recorded by the advancement chairperson.
- A Scout should enter the room, introduce himself to the board, and hand his book to the chairperson. The board chairperson will give further instructions.
- The board will review the candidates' *Scout Handbook* and other documentation to make sure all requirements have been properly completed. A Scout should, of course, "Be Prepared" and perform the double check himself before meeting the board.
- The members of the board will then ask a series of questions. Some will be about the specific skills related to the rank advancement, although Scouts will not be asked to demonstrate skills that have been signed off. Some questions will be about how a Scout has brought Scouting into his everyday life. Questions may be about how the Scout believes the troop can improve. A Scout should also expect to answer questions about his involvement in community service activities and discuss, in detail, his contributions as a leader, if he occupies a leadership position.
- As a Scout advances in rank he can expect the questions to be a bit more thought-provoking.

The Scout will then be excused while the board members decide if they believe he is ready to advance to the next rank. The Scout will be called back to the room and given the board's decision.

If selected for advancement, a Scout will be immediately congratulated and his advancement will be recognized at the next court of honor. The official date of the new rank is the day that it was approved by the board of review. The clock for time requirements for the next rank begins ticking when the board approves the rank advancement. If a Scout is not selected for advancement and feels they have sufficiently completed all of the rank requirements, there is an appeal process available. The Scout should contact the district representative from council concerning this matter and to proceed with an appeal.

A Few Words about the Eagle Scout Rank

The Eagle Scout rank is universally recognized as a sign of distinction. Only about 5% of the boys that enter the Scouting program will become Eagle Scouts. For the latest information on the Eagle rank, procedures for becoming an Eagle, Eagle application forms, and the latest Eagle project booklet check out the following three sources:

- The troop Eagle Advancement Coordinator
- The Yankee Clipper Council website (www.yccbsa.org)
- The National Eagle Scout Association (www.nesa.org) website

Other Comments

- It is a Scout's responsibility to advance. A Scout should always have a plan for rank advancement and stick to it. Slow, steady progress is the key to success. Scouting is a marathon, not a sprint.
- Parents should monitor their son's progress and encourage his continued advancement. Scouts are supposed to do this on their own, but a tactful nudge from time to time is often in order.
- The Eagle rank is not simply about a Scout completing a checklist of items. Eagles are expected to be proven leaders and Troop 95 therefore expects its Eagle candidates to have actively sought and enthusiastically carried out senior leadership roles. Since Eagles represent the top 5% of Scouts, it is reasonable to expect them to have filled the most challenging leadership positions. A natural progression for an Eagle candidate would be Patrol Leader, ASPL, then SPL.
- The board will expect a Scout in a leadership position to have fulfilled the responsibilities of that position. A Scout-led troop relies upon its Scout leaders to do their jobs – this is important in the leadership development for the Scout as well as the effect on the troop. A Scout who has not consistently performed the duties of his assigned or elected leadership position can expect to have his rank advancement postponed by the board.
- Just a reminder -- it is VERY IMPORTANT to save all rank and merit badge blue cards. We suggest that you keep them in a binder; baseball card collector plastic sleeves work exceptionally well for organizing, storing and protecting them. They are your proof of completing requirements – should you transfer to another troop or if there has been an error in recording your work, you will need this documentation when preparing for the Eagle Scout Board of Review.
- Your camping log -- The Scout handbook includes pages that are a log of nights spent camping. It is STRONGLY suggested that each Scout develop the discipline of recording their nights of camping in this log starting with their first overnight Troop outing. It serves as proof for the CAMPING merit badge, which is required for the rank of Eagle. If this log is not maintained, then providing proof of the requirements will be much more difficult and could result in having to repeat camping events for the Camping merit badge counselor to be able to sign off approval of the requirement.

Chapter 11 - Merit Badges

From the earliest days of Scouting, merit badges have been awarded to Scouts that have mastered a set of skills in a particular subject area. Today, there are over 130 merit badges that Scouts can earn (and, yes, there are a few – very few – Scouts who have earned them all).

Merit badges are a great way to learn about a new subject, or to delve a little deeper into an area that interests you. Merit badges may be earned at any time by a registered Scout. While it is recommended that Scouts concentrate on rank advancement until achieving First Class rank, it can be fun and rewarding to earn a few merit badges early on. Once a Scout has achieved the First Class rank, the requirements for rank advancement shift heavily toward merit badges. Star rank, for example, requires that a Scout earn six merit badges. Of those, four must be from the required list for Eagle Scout. Twenty one merit badges are required to attain the rank of Eagle Scout, and thirteen must come from the “Eagle required” list – a special group of merit badges that emphasize citizenship, the outdoors, fitness, and life skills. As previously stated in chapter eight, these are Camping, Citizenship in the Community, Citizenship in the Nation, Citizenship in the World, Communications, Environmental Science, Family Life, First Aid, Personal Fitness, Personal Management, Emergency Preparedness OR Lifesaving, Cycling OR Hiking OR Swimming, and Cooking.

Merit Badge Requirements

The list of requirements for each merit badge is published annually in a book called *Boy Scout Requirements*. It is important to use the latest edition, as the requirements are updated each year. The most current requirements are available at www.meritbadge.org, which also has links to many resources to help in learning about the subject of the merit badge. The BSA publishes a pamphlet for each merit badge which has all of the background information a Scout needs to study for the merit badge. The troop has many of these available for checkout. They’re also available at Scouting outlets or by mail order at a nominal cost.

It’s a good idea to flip through the merit badge requirements book and plan ahead for badges you’d like to set your sights on. You’ll find that there are probably quite a few that you qualify for with just a little extra work because you’ve covered the material at school or as a hobby.

Merit Badge Procedures

So, how does a Scout get a merit badge? The procedures are simple, but please don’t skip steps. A Scout should follow these steps:

1. Once you decide which merit badge you’d like to pursue, make sure you have access to the merit badge pamphlet and an approved counselor for that merit badge as part of your decision process. It’s important to make sure that the requirements of the merit badge are within your capabilities. For example, the Chemistry merit badge is best obtained after taking high school chemistry. If you need help finding a counselor, ask one of the troop’s adult leaders. A list of counselors available within the troop is available on the troop website, www.westfordtroop95.com.
2. Get an “Application for a Merit Badge” form, also called a “blue card” from the Scoutmaster or one of the assistant Scoutmasters. Make sure you fill it out properly – ask if you’re not sure how.

The Scoutmaster will make sure you have a counselor lined up and that you're ready to take on the requirements of that merit badge before signing the blue card.

3. Familiarize yourself with the requirements and contact the merit badge counselor. Ask for guidance on any areas you don't understand. Remember, the counselor is there to provide assistance and to steer you in the right direction, not to serve as a substitute for studying the book. You and your counselor may decide on a number of progress checks to sign off on requirements as they're accomplished (particularly on some of the more complex or lengthy requirements).
4. **IMPORTANT!** If you visit a counselor you **MUST** always go with a buddy. This can be a friend, parent, or sibling, but you cannot go alone. A counselor cannot, by Boy Scout regulations, meet with a Scout (other than his/her own son) without another person present. When you visit, you're expected to be prepared, polite, and dressed in the **Official Field Uniform** (also known as the Class A uniform).
5. What's expected? You're expected to fulfill the requirements of the merit badge -- nothing more, nothing less. The merit badge book has the background needed to answer questions relating to the requirements -- use it as your guide. Pay careful attention to the requirements. If it says, "demonstrate", this means "demonstrate", not "discuss."
6. After you have completed all requirements, the merit badge counselor will sign your blue card. He/she keeps one part, you keep one part, and the third part is turned in to the troop's advancement chair. The ultimate responsibility for doing this rests with the Scout! Until a blue card is properly completed and turned in, you have **NOT** completed the merit badge. Keep your copy! It's your record in case something gets lost (and that has been known to happen).
7. Your merit badge will then be presented at the next court of honor, although it is officially "on the record" for use in rank advancement as soon as the Merit Badge Counselor signs that it has been completed .

The most common mistakes in this process are:

- Not having the Scoutmaster sign the blue card when starting to work on a merit badge (some merit badge counselors, rightfully so, will not sign off requirements until this is done).
- Not properly filling out the blue card by either the Scout or the counselor.
- Not reading the merit badge book and/or not completing requirements before the conference with the merit badge counselor. The merit badge book is specific and comprehensive, and it's pretty obvious when a Scout hasn't taken the time to read it. Showing up unprepared for a merit badge conference is an unfair waste of a counselor's time and is disrespectful.

Other Merit Badge Info

- From time to time troops, districts, or councils will have "merit badge workshops." These gatherings are generally "self-contained" -- that means they teach you what you need to know, give you materials to complete all projects, and evaluate your work. The idea is to walk away with a completed merit badge and signed blue card. Sometimes there are prerequisite requirements that must be completed in advance -- unless you do so, you'll walk away with a "partial" and could likely find it very difficult to get back with a counselor to complete the requirements.
- A Scout is responsible for keeping his unfinished blue card. If you lose it you may have to complete the requirements again.
- There is no time limit on the completion of merit badges, as long as they're done by the time a Scout turns 18.

- If you'd like to maximize the number of badges you get at summer camp, look carefully at the requirements and complete as much in advance as possible. At camp you will have access to a wide range of counselors who are more than happy to sign off your badge requirements . . . but obviously can't sign off that a badge is completed until all requirements have been met. Leaving even one incomplete requirement means you'll have to find a counselor when you return home to verify that last requirement. It's far better to walk away from camp with a completed blue card.
- When you complete a merit badge, give the blue card to your Scoutmaster immediately. That way all blue cards get handed in and processed at the same time. Otherwise, they tend to disappear into corners of backpacks, jean pockets, or other strange places. Washing machines can do brutal things to blue cards.

Chapter 12 - Training – Adult and Scout

Scouting offers many wonderful training opportunities for both Scouts and adult leaders. Because of the nature of the program – many new people entering each year – BSA has placed a great deal of emphasis on its training courses. These courses are well-conceived, thorough, and taught by motivated instructors. A more detailed explanation of the Boy Scout training program is available on our website, but new Scouts and their parents should be aware of the courses in this chapter. Adult leaders can ask our troop's training coordinator for more information. If you'd like to take the online training, go to the BSA National Website (www.myscouting.org) and establish an account in their online training section. If you're a registered adult it would be helpful to have your member ID number handy when you establish your online training account. Your ID number is listed on your membership card or can be obtained from one of our leaders with access to the *Troopmaster* data base.

Adult Training

The key adult training courses are:

- Youth Protection Training** - Youth Protection training provides adult volunteers with an understanding about child abuse and youth protection policies of the Boy Scouts of America. It is Troop 95's policy that every adult with direct youth contact in any way have a current youth protection training certification. This course can be taken on-line and takes about half an hour. **Training must be taken with 90 days of registration as an adult leader.** Certification is good for two years.
- Boy Scout Fast Start Training** – Provides a quick overall introduction to Scouting -- takes about an hour and is offered online. The course is also offered frequently throughout the year. We highly encourage all parents to take this course.
- This is Scouting** - An overview of the Scouting program with an emphasis on information that would be useful to adult leaders. This course is available online.
- Leader Specific Training** – A follow on to “This is Scouting”, Leader Specific Training provides additional training for adults involved in specific leadership roles within the troop. These courses are offered in modular fashion and can be taken one at a time. Check the Council website for upcoming sessions.
- Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills** is specifically targeted to leaders that want to serve as a Scoutmaster or assistant Scoutmaster. It generally involves an overnight campout and introduces specific outdoor skills such as knots, fire building, safety, Totin' Chip, and camping.
- Troop Committee Challenge** is an online introduction to the important role the Troop Committee has in carrying out the troop's overall program. It should be taken by all committee members.

To be considered as “trained” for an adult leader position and eligible to wear the “trained” patch, leaders must complete:

For Committee Members:

- This Is Scouting (online)
- Troop Committee Challenge (online)

For Scoutmasters and Assistant Scoutmasters:

- Youth Protection Training (online)
- This Is Scouting (online)
- Boy Scout Leader Specific Training (Scoutmaster/Assistant SM Training)
- Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills

The Scoutmaster Handbook

The *Scoutmaster Handbook*, published by the BSA provides adults with an excellent overview of the program, its goals, and how to attain them. We highly encourage you to take the time to read it, even if you only plan to participate in Troop activities on an occasional basis.

Scout Training

For Scouts, most training is conducted within the troop itself. Leadership training is an ongoing process and Scout skills are part of a Scout’s advancement requirements.

There are, however, specific training opportunities available to Scouts. These include:

- Life to Eagle seminars** – answers questions and provides information targeted at Scouts that have achieved the Life rank to help them clear the hurdle to Eagle Scout. These are generally held twice a year.
- Den Chief Training** Council Sponsored, it provides excellent background information for Scouts wishing to serve as a Den Chief for a Cub Scout den.
- National Youth Leadership Training** – A six day leadership course specifically designed for Scouts – an outstanding introduction to leadership concepts and practical application of those concepts.

Chapter 13 – Troop Financials

Troop 95 has its own bank account managed by our treasurer and all expenditures are made with the approval of the troop committee. The troop has three main sources of income – fund raisers, dues, and fees assessed for specific events (such as campouts). Following is an overview of how the troop handles its funds.

The Troop Budget

Each year the troop committee creates a budget of anticipated expenditures for the year ahead. What is troop money spent for? The troop buys new equipment from time to time (such as tents, Dutch ovens, stoves, and other camping gear). We also reimburse expenses that individuals incur in supporting the troop. All of the gifts for new troop members are paid for by the troop and each Scout receives a subscription to *Boys' Life*, the official BSA publication for Scouts. Adult registrations are paid for by the troop and registered leaders receive a copy of *Scouting* magazine, the BSA's leader publication. The troop treasury also fronts registration fees and deposits for activities which are generally required well before individual Scouts register for the trips. The troop, like any organization, also has administrative fees (stamps, paper, repro costs, etc) that are paid from troop funds. The troop treasurer keeps a detailed budget that is presented at each committee meeting.

Fundraisers

The troop committee approves fundraising activities for the troop. Currently we have one major fund raiser each year – Luminary sales. Scouts and Scout families are expected to participate in fundraising as they represent the primary sources of revenue to keep the troop running. Fundraising involves a considerable amount of planning, and we're always looking for volunteers to assist with this.

What is a Scout expected to pay for?

- Dues – Annual dues are \$100. Dues are payable in the fall for the upcoming year.
- Each Scout that attends an activity is expected to pay the fee for that activity. This varies from one activity to the next, but for campouts it is generally around \$50-75. This will cover registration costs and food. One Scout typically buys the food for his patrol. We've found that including the food costs into the registration fee and letting the Scout be reimbursed by the troop is far easier than seeking reimbursement from each patrol member.
- Summer camp – Traditional camps generally cost around \$300 for the entire week. High adventure camps typically involve considerably higher fees as the cost of maintaining these camps is higher and the transportation costs may involve airfare.
- Camping gear – Scouts generally purchase some of their own camping gear, but most essential equipment is available for checkout from the troop. Please refer to Chapter 8 of this guide for suggestions relating to camping gear.
- Uniforms – Troop 95 Scouts will purchase their own uniforms.
- Important note – A boy's Scouting experience should **never** be limited for financial reasons. A number of programs are available should a family need help to underwrite the costs of Scouting. Please contact the Committee Chair or Scoutmaster if assistance is needed.

- A note on deadlines – Most payments have an associated registration deadline. This allows the troop to better plan participation – and is particularly important when the troop is committing funds for a particular event. Please ensure you make payments on time.

Chapter 14 - Service to Others

“One more item is needed to complete success, and that is the rendering of service to others in the community.”

-- Lord Robert Baden-Powell

One of the fundamental underpinnings of the Scouting program has always been service to others. While some Scout ranks require service hours for advancement, in Troop 95 we emphasize the importance of ongoing service – that service to others is not to be thought of as simply a requirement to be checked off. Scouts should report all of their service hours, not just those involving Scout activities. Citizenship and service are not something practiced once a week at Scout meetings, but represent traits that the Scouting program promotes at all times. The goal is to build solid citizens and service is an important part of that goal.

What are Service Hours?

Service to others is simply that – when the service is given without remuneration or direct benefit to the Scout. Shoveling the snow from your neighbor’s walkway is not service if you get paid for it. Performing the work as a favor, without pay, constitutes service time. Here are a few examples of community service:

- Alter server in church
- Clean up or repair work at a church or community center
- Volunteer work in a food bank, community center, retirement home, or charity such as Habitat for Humanity, etc
- Reading to shut-ins
- Working on a conservation project
- Picking up trash along a highway
- Serving a volunteer tutor for students

While it’s important to know what can be used as service hours, it’s also important to know what is NOT considered community service. Activities for which you’re paid are not generally considered as community service. Also, Boy Scout fundraising events where the beneficiary is the troop or Boy Scouting would NOT be community service. A fundraising event where all of the proceeds are turned over to a charity or another Scouting organization (such as Girl Scouts), however, would be community service. Time spent working on Eagle projects is community service. Please ask one of the adult leaders if there are any questions in this area.

Recording Service Hours

Recording service hours is simple. We have a form to record those hours. Please note that the project should be approved in advance by one of the adult leaders. While this is not an absolute requirement, it eliminates confusion that sometimes arises about what constitutes actual service hours. If we’re working on a troop project (such as Scouting for Food or an Eagle project), the adult leaders will keep track of a Scout’s participation and record the hours, so a special form need not be submitted.

Chapter 15 – Medical Matters

The Scouting program is structured to be as safe as possible, but accidents can occur and with our “Be Prepared” motto, we want to do everything possible to ensure the tools are in place should an emergency arise. Many of our activities are outdoors and falls, scrapes, insect bites, splinters, etc. are inevitable. The troop always takes a first aid kit on any outing and troop leaders will treat minor issues on the spot. With that in mind, however, leaders will need to know of any special needs, allergies, or other medical information that would affect a boy’s treatment. Please let us know before your son takes off on his first campout.

Permission Slip

Before any Troop 95 activity, parents are asked to fill out and sign a “permission slip” listing emergency contact numbers, medical insurance information, and a release for the troop leaders, in an emergency, to seek medical attention for their sons.

Summer Camps

BSA summer camps have on-site medical care – usually an EMT on duty around the clock. At camp all medical issues are handled by the camp medical staff. Camps require a completed, current medical form (see further information below) for each Scout and adult leader and a medical check is included as part of the annual in-processing at camp. If the medical form is missing or incomplete a Scout or leader cannot attend camp. There are **no** exceptions. We are **not allowed** to bring a Scout or leader to camp that doesn’t have the proper medical form on file. Please ensure that a current form is turned in to our medical coordinator no later than the end of May for an upcoming summer camp.

Prescription and Medications

The official BSA policy concerning prescription medications is as follows:

The taking of prescription medication is the responsibility of the individual taking the medication and/or that individual's parent or guardian. A Scout leader, after obtaining all the necessary information, can agree to accept the responsibility of making sure a Scout takes the necessary medication at the appropriate time, but BSA policy does not mandate nor necessarily encourage the Scout leader to do so. (from the BSA *Guide to Safe Scouting*)

Our leaders will work with families to ensure that medication is properly dispensed.

Please note that we will not dispense over the counter medications unless permission is given to do so. The troop’s medical form (see below) offers parents the option of allowing troop leaders to do so. Some BSA summer camps require that all prescription medications be stored at the camp medical office and be dispensed by the staff. Summer camps will often ask that a special form be filled out should a Scout need prescription medication.

BSA Medical Forms

Each Scout will need an updated medical form each year. Blank forms can be downloaded from the council website (www.yccbsa.org). Specific instructions for the med forms are included as part of the form itself.

Very important!!! Summer camps, particularly high adventure camps, often require their own forms. Make sure you fully understand the requirements for a camp. Scouts and Scouters that do not have proper med forms cannot register at camp – **no** exceptions.

Scouters over 40 will require an annual physical.

We are aware that medical forms contain sensitive personal information. All troop medical forms and permission slips are shredded when no longer needed.

Chapter 16 - Troop Communications

A Scout is responsible for knowing what is going on in the troop, what events are coming up, and what events he plans to attend. Announcements are made at the beginning of every troop meeting and Scouts should take note of the schedule of events and make plans to participate, if applicable. Scouts that miss a meeting should contact their patrol leader or other patrol member to get updated information about upcoming activities. Parents should ask Scouts about scheduled activities and events after every meeting to make sure the proper information makes it to the family calendar.

Additionally, information on troop activities is available through two primary sources – email and the Troop website (www.westfordtroop95.com). “Troop updates” are sent from time to time via email with the latest information, changes, etc., and are sent to any and every email that’s on our list. Please make sure the email address(s) we’re using is current and that we’re using an address that you check frequently.

Troop wide e-mails are sent through Yahoo Groups e-mails. To join the Troop 95 Yahoo Group, supply your e-mail to an adult leader (i.e. Scoutmaster, Committee Chair, Committee Member, etc) and a Yahoo Group invitation will be sent to you. Once you receive the Yahoo Group invitation e-mail, you will follow the directions in that e-mail to complete the e-mail group joining process and then you will receive all e-mails distributed by the Yahoo Group.

It’s particularly important to check emails daily when we’re getting close to an activity, as updates on how many participants are attending/, who is providing transportation, who is buying the food, etc. can change.

The troop’s website www.westfordtroop95.com is updated frequently and is also a good source for current information.

Realizing that not everyone uses email, please let us know if you’d prefer to receive information via a different means. We don’t mind making phone calls, but will use email in the absence of further direction.

Information flow is a two way street. While there are many valid reasons that a Scout cannot attend activities, he should develop the responsible approach of letting his leaders (patrol leader, or senior patrol leader) know when he’s unable to attend a meeting or activity. If a Scout expects to have extended absences from troop activities due to scheduling conflicts (e.g. sports, church activities), he should personally notify the Scoutmaster.

Chapter 17 - Safety & Discipline

Every effort is made to make the Scouting program as safe as possible. While adult leaders may sometimes allow Scouts to make mistakes as a learning experience, safety is never compromised and leaders will immediately intervene for any safety related issue.

Guide to Safe Scouting

The bible of Scout safety is a pamphlet entitled, "The Guide to Safe Scouting." The latest edition can be found on the BSA national website and is available for purchase at the Scout Store. The guide includes detailed guidelines for conducting various activities and lists prohibited activities (for example, the use of all-terrain vehicles, participation in boxing or martial arts activities, hang gliding, bungee jumping, and paintball are all prohibited activities).

Please note that in accordance with BSA or Troop 95 policies the following are prohibited at any time:

- Sheath knives
- Knives with blades longer than 4"
- Fireworks
- Illegal drugs
- Firearms (except under very narrow conditions when participating in a shooting activity)
- Swimming in an unauthorized area
- Use of tobacco products (while the use of tobacco products by adults is discouraged, adults can discreetly use tobacco products away from Scouts)
- Alcoholic beverages
- Hazing of any type

Two Deep Leadership

Boy Scout youth protection guidelines require at least two registered adult leaders or one registered leader and a parent of a participant, one of whom must be 21 years old, to be on all trips and activities. No one-on-one contact between adults and youth members is permitted (except in the case of parent-son). Troop 95 requires that all adult leaders with direct contact with Scouts have current BSA Youth Protection Training.

Discipline

Although we hope to never implement disciplinary measures, the following should be familiar to all Troop 95 Scouts and their families:

- Illegal drugs, alcohol, or tobacco (outside of above guidelines) use is strictly prohibited and use of such during any Scouting activity by either a boy or adult will result in immediate expulsion from that activity and may result in further action by the troop committee.

- Inappropriate behavior is defined as behavior unbecoming a Scout (i.e., behavior not in accordance with the Scout Law, Scout Oath, or Outdoor Code) during meetings or activities. Continued inappropriate behavior will be referred to the troop committee for further action.
- The SPL's role is not to impose discipline, but to lead the troop. Although he does have the authority to settle minor disputes as he sees fit (with Scoutmaster approval), the Scoutmaster and/or Assistant Scoutmaster in charge will deal with major disputes or disturbances.
- For continuous inappropriate behavior at meetings or activities, a Scout may be put on probation.
- A probationary period can last up to one year. During that time, the presence of a parent or other adult who accepts responsibility for the Scout during any Scout activity may be required.
- When inappropriate behavior occurs at a Scout activity, parents may be called to pick up the Scout immediately.
- An adult leader who witnesses serious inappropriate behavior by a Scout will provide a written report to the Scout and his parents, the Scoutmaster, and troop committee. Upon receiving this report, the Scoutmaster, with the approval of the troop committee and the advice of the patrol leaders' council will counsel the Scout and determine an appropriate action. This can include limiting the Scout's participation in troop activities until the Scout's parents meet with the troop committee to resolve the issue.

Chapter 18 - Other Miscellaneous Topics

There are always a few of those “other” topics that don’t seem to fit elsewhere, so we gathered them together into this section.

The Troop Calendar and Annual Planning Meeting

Every year, in late spring or early summer, the troop meets to set its schedule for the following school year. Inputs are solicited from the committee, parents, and Scouts and the group puts together its activity schedule. All parents and Scouts are strongly encouraged to attend. Our general scheduling objectives include:

- A monthly campout
- Minimizing conflict with school holidays
- Attendance at the fall, winter and spring District camporees

Order of the Arrow

The Order of the Arrow (OA) is Scouting’s camping honor society. Its four stated purposes are:

- To recognize those Scout campers who best exemplify the Scout Oath and Law in their daily lives,
- To develop and maintain camping traditions and spirit,
- To promote Scout camping, and
- To crystallize the Scout habit of helpfulness into a life purpose of leadership in cheerful service to others.

To become eligible for membership a Scout must meet the minimum criteria (a certain number of days camping, First Class rank, etc) and be elected by non-OA youth members of the troop. Elections are held at one of the troop meetings in the Jan – March time frame. Scouts that are elected are “tapped out” at the district’s spring camporee and are offered the opportunity to accept the challenge of the “ordeal” to become a member. To add to the mystery of the experience, the ordeal and ceremonies associated with the OA are generally not discussed outside of OA membership. This has sometimes led to the OA being erroneously called a “secret society”, but all ceremonies, scripts, events, etc, are open to interested adults. There are no “secret societies” or ceremonies within Boy Scouting. As with the rest of the Scouting program, no hazing or demeaning activity is permitted. The purpose of the “ordeal” is to teach a Scout that they can subordinate their immediate needs for the good of others in the spirit of cheerful service. Parents are invited to review OA ceremonies and attend if desired. Adult leaders are also eligible for OA membership and are nominated by troop, district, or council leadership. Only about 12% of the Scouts and Scouters are OA members.

Chapter 19 - Expectations of Scouts and Parents

"The spirit is there in every boy; it has to be discovered and brought to light."

- Lord Robert Baden-Powell

Scouts – Do Your Best

- Live by the Scout Oath and Law
- Support the Scouting program in word and deed
- Obey and respect Scout and adult leaders
- Arrive for activities on time and prepared for the activity
- Encourage other boys to join Scouting
- Treat fellow Scouts and adult leaders with respect
- Continue to advance
- Be an active participant in the troop
- Fulfill the requirements of any leadership position you accept
- Respect the uniform and wear it properly

Parents - Support Your Son's Scouting Activities

- Help him to meet the expectations of a Scout, as listed above
- Monitor his advancement in the program and provide encouragement and guidance
- Ensure he is prepared for activities and arrives on time
- Allow him to grow – *do not do his work for him*
- Ensure he follows through on his commitments
- Be aware of the obligations of leadership and ensure he follows through on those obligations
- Try to minimize conflict between family obligations and Scouting activities
- Ensure payments are made on time and that all required paperwork (e.g. permission slips, medical forms) are completed and turned in by established deadlines
- Support the troop
 - Become involved in the troop at some level
 - Complete Scouting's basic adult training
 - Actively participate in fundraising activities

Chapter 20 – Scoutmaster’s Closing Comments

In my role of Scoutmaster I’ve been asked “what constitutes a successful Scout?” The question really has no answer. Scouting is a personal experience and appeals to different boys in different ways. As adults, we also define success in many ways – some seek high position, some measure success in terms of income, others may be motivated by a sense of discovery – “success” can be an elusive term to quantify. If I were to offer one definition of success as a Scout, it would simply be that a man look back on his Scouting experience with a smile and know that he’s a better man for having been a Scout.

To Scouts, set your goals and stick to them. You’ll feel better about yourself as you make your way through the program. Start with achieving the First Class rank – that marks you as a “complete Scout” – you’ve learned the basic skills of Scouting that will serve you well for the rest of your life. Help others. Try to participate in as many Scouting activities as you can. It’s through activities – particularly outdoor activities – that you grow. But, above all, have fun. Life is an adventure and a gathering of stories, LETS GO MAKE SOME!!

For parents, in Scouting you have a unique opportunity. You have a short sliver of time to share Scouting experiences together with your son – to enjoy life’s ride side by side. What could be better than doing so away from the distractions of modern life where you can share in the most simple and basic ways. Scouting isn’t just for the boys – it’s for all of us.

Scouting is a wonderful program and offers young men tremendous opportunities to grow as individuals, practice leadership by actually being leaders, learn skills that they’ll use throughout their lives, and develop as solid citizens. As with anything else in life, however, results are directly proportional to commitment. The most successful Scouts are motivated and nearly always have the strong backing of a committed family. In Troop 95 we have dedicated leaders who will work diligently with our Scouts to help them achieve their potential, but getting the most out of the program takes an active partnership among parents, Scouts, and Scouting leaders. Working together we can maximize the benefit of the program for our troop and our Scouts.

Happy Scouting!