

Scout Resource Guide 2017



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GOOSE CREEK DISTRICT
NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA COUNCIL
BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

January 2017



The resources listed in this document are articles from previous Goose Creek District monthly newsletters (2011-2016). They include BSA policy guidance, methods, places of interest, websites, books, and much more. All of the links have been rechecked to ensure that they are still active.

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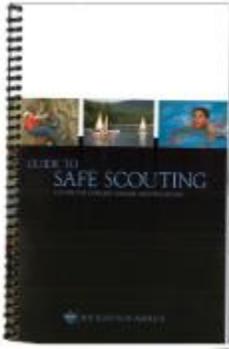
Article Key:

	Cub Scout interest
	Boy Scout interest
	For Everyone

Program Development

Safe Scouting and Youth Protection

Manual – Guide to Safe Scouting



Can Scouts go skateboarding? What about wakeboarding? Are they allowed to fire a cannon? Throw a tomahawk? Explore an abandoned mine? Sell fireworks?

Yes, yes, no, yes, no, and no.

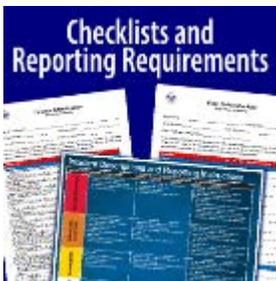
How did I know all that? Easy. I read the **Guide to Safe Scouting**. The comprehensive policies and procedures manual, available online, is a one-stop safety shop for packs, troops, teams, and crews.

If you're new to the Boy Scouts of America, now is the time to familiarize yourself with proper safety practices. Just about any safety-related question you have is answered.

The online version is available for free and will continue to be updated quarterly. Find it at www.scouting.org/scoutsource/HealthandSafety/GSS/toc.aspx. There are Scouters who like to download that PDF version to their smartphone or tablet, making the document easily searchable by keyword.

But others prefer a hard copy, which is where the new, smaller, spiral-bound version really shines. It's available soon for the same fair price of the previous version: \$6. Find it at your local Scout Shops and at www.scoutstuff.org.

New Tools in Guide to Safe Scouting



Keeping Scouts safe is a key responsibility of any Scouter, and Safe scouting requires we understand and manage the risks involved in our activities.

Scouter Walter Underwood has posted an excellent overview of recent changes to the Guide to Safe Scouting that includes:

- A Campout Safety Checklist (PDF), www.scouting.org/filestore/HealthSafety/pdf/campout_checklist.pdf
- Event Safety Checklist (PDF), www.scouting.org/filestore/HealthSafety/pdf/event_checklist.pdf
- Incident Information Report (fillable PDF), www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/680-016_fillable.pdf
- and Near Miss Incident Information Report (fillable PDF), www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/680-017_fillable.pdf

Every Scouter should review the Guide to Safe Scouting and be familiar with the key concepts of maintaining a safe environment. Scouters hold a sacred trust to do all in their power to maintain a safe environment for adventure. It's not only possible, it's essential. We should all take the time to study these resources and learn how to apply them.

Why are SSN's Required on an Adult Application



An adult applicant's Social Security number is required on the adult application form in order for the National Council to conduct a criminal background check. This is done on every volunteer who applies for membership in the BSA. The applicant's date of birth and driver's license numbers are also used to help identify potential issues with a volunteer and screen out those who may not be appropriate in a position where they work with youth. The BSA will not accept an application unless the Social Security number is provided.

The BSA understands the importance of confidentiality in maintaining this personal information and encourages units and chartered organizations to do the same. Therefore, the SSN space is blocked out on the carbonless copies of the form (the unit, chartered organization and applicant copies) so this information cannot be seen or retained by the unit. While this does not stop a committee chair or chartered organization representative from seeing it on the form (these two individuals must sign their approval to all volunteers in the unit), A Scout is Trustworthy enough to not misuse this information.

All applications, upon acceptance by the council office, are scanned and sent to the national office in Irving, Texas for data entry. Background checks are conducted by the BSA's National Council in Irving, Texas as part of screening and registering all adult volunteers. These background checks are performed by LexisNexis, which also does background checks for state and local governments as well as other national volunteer organizations. (You could even use their services personally – when hiring a housekeeper or babysitter, for instance.) In almost all cases, processing goes smoothly and nothing further is heard. In the rare instance that a problem is discovered during the background check, the National Council will notify council and the chartered organization (but not the unit leader or other volunteers). The chartered organization would then have the responsibility to remove that particular volunteer from service.

We must realize that the interests of protecting the youth in our care take top priority, and this is the reason that the personal information is collected from each volunteer.

BSA offers NetSmartz program to keep kids safe online



Frustrated by the prospect of keeping today's always-connected kids safe from harm? Fear not; help is here.

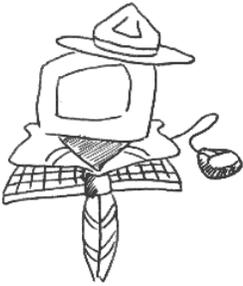
The Boy Scouts of America announced recently that it's partnering with the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children to offer the center's NetSmartz Internet safety program to Scouters (www.NetSmartz.org/Parents).

The program "provides age-appropriate resources to help teach children how to be safer on- and offline." It's also aligned perfectly with the BSA's own comprehensive Youth Protection strategies.

NetSmartz features resources for children ages 5 to 17 and their parents, guardians, or adult leaders. You'll find videos, games, activity cards, and some excellent quick-read tip sheets.

You'll need a free account to access most of the materials, but signing up takes seconds.

The 'No One-On-One Contact' Provision Applies to Digital Contact, Too



The BSA's Youth Protection guidelines prohibit one-one-one contact between adults and youth members. That much you know. But in a world where an increasing number of our communications are digital, how does that rule apply?

The policy of two-deep leadership extends into cyberspace. There should be no one-on-one online or digital activities (games, social media, etc.) or electronic communications. Leaders should include or copy a parent or another leader in all online communications, ensuring no one-on-one contact exists in text, social media or other forms of online or digital communication.

Our partners at the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) NetSmartz Workshop program advise us child predators are knowledgeable about BSA's policies regarding two-deep leadership and no one-on-one contact. As a result, they seek interactions with youth in cyberspace where youth interact with each other and are usually unsupervised by parents (i.e., gaming, chat rooms, etc.)

As a safety precaution to protect youth and leaders, we require all interactions (e.g., texting, email, instant messaging, etc.) to be copied to a parent or other registered leader. While we understand that this may present a challenge to some, we feel that safe interactions are of prime concern.

As a reminder, all leaders should be providing the Cyber Chip program to Scouting youth so that they may be better able to recognize, respond to and report inappropriate activity to the CyberTipline (1-800-THE-LOST (843-5678)) and local Scout executive. To help families and volunteers keep youth safe while online, the BSA introduced the Cyber Chip.

We also recommend that Eagle Scout coaches who are selected by units become registered. By registering these key leaders in the growth of our Scouts, they would then be properly vetted through background checks and would be required to take Youth Protection training. What better way to ensure the safety of all our youth, than by asking all adults involved with the advancement of these Scouts to be a part of our safety programs?

NCMEC suggests that leaders and parents of Scouts check out the following NetSmartz website and tip sheet that provide helpful information on safe cell phone usage:

<http://www.netsmartz.org/CellPhones>

http://cdn.netsmartz.org/tipsheets/smartphone_safety.pdf

Bicycle Helmet Fitting



As we approach good outdoor weather again it is important to keep in mind safety for all outdoor activities.

Helmets are required for all BSA cycling activities. It is important to note that this applies to adults also. Your helmet isn't going to do you much good if it doesn't fit correctly. The following link has several guidelines on making sure you have a good helmet fitting: www.ScouterMom.com/6575/helmet-inspection/

E-Cigarettes Now Included in BSA Smoking Policy



The BSA has added electronic cigarettes, or e-cigarettes, to its tobacco-use policy, effective immediately.

Boy Scouts of America meetings, functions and activities continue to be smoke-free; that hasn't changed. What's new is the smoke-free policy now includes the use of electronic cigarettes, personal vaporizers and other electronic nicotine delivery systems.

In May, the Risk Management advisory panel, made up of two Scout executives from each region, passed a motion recommending to the Chief Scout Executive that "vaping" be added to BSA's tobacco-use policy. BSA Chief Scout Executive Wayne Brock approved the recommendation, and therefore, effective with the October 2014 electronic updates to the Guide To Safe Scouting, the Tobacco portion of "Section IV: Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Use and Abuse" now reads:

*Adult leaders should support the attitude that they, as well as youth, are better off without tobacco in any form and may not allow the use of tobacco products at any BSA activity involving youth participants. **This includes the use of electronic cigarettes, personal vaporizers, or electronic nicotine delivery systems that simulate tobacco smoking.***

All Scouting functions, meetings, and activities should be conducted on a smoke-free basis, with smoking areas located away from all participants.

Water Guns OK for Target Shooting, Not for Firing at other Scouts



As summer — and pool weather! — lingers on the horizon, it's a good time to remind you that BSA policies prohibit pointing simulated firearms at people.

Yes, that includes water guns.

The official source for this information: the 2015 *Boy Scouts of America National Shooting Sports Manual*, available as a PDF here:

www.scouting.org/filestore/Outdoor%20Program/pdf/30931_WB.pdf

You'll find the relevant sentence on page 99. It reads: "Water guns and rubber band guns must only be used to shoot at targets, and eye protection must be worn."

Water balloons, meanwhile, have a size limit: "For water balloons, use small, biodegradable balloons, and fill them no larger than a ping pong ball." (Page 100)

If you need more explanation, see page 61 of the *Guide to Safe Scouting* (www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/34416.pdf). The key paragraph reads:

"Pointing any type of firearm or simulated firearm at any individual is unauthorized. Scout units may plan or participate in paintball, laser tag or similar events where participants shoot at targets that are neither living nor human representations."

Handling Bullying



From Ask Andy, <http://netcommissioner.com/askandy/2016/01/issue-470-january-12-2016/>

Dear Andy,

How do we deal with a Scout who's not fitting into our troop because of his own, unprompted bullying and generally mean behavior? What alternatives does a Scoutmaster have, short of dismissing the Scout from the troop?

The BSA is pretty specific on situations in which a Scout brings, or threatens to bring, physical harm or emotional abuse upon a fellow Scout: He is to be removed from further participation with the troop until his threatening behaviors cease. This is done in face-to-face conversation between the Committee Chair and Scoutmaster, and the Scout and his parent(s). The purpose of the removal is to eliminate the possibility of harm coming to another Scout in the troop; it is not intended to be punishment but, rather, a consequence of his behavior, and for the protection of his fellow Scouts. Per the inventor and philosopher Jeremy Bentham, you're seeking the greatest good for the greatest number. Which, in this case, is the troop as a whole.

This is done when direct counseling by the Scoutmaster (first) and the Scoutmaster and Committee Chair (second, and together) fail to reverse the abusive trend or to end the youth-to-youth physical contact.

The Scout is not, however, dismissed from Scouting itself; he is simply removed from putting others in harm's way until he can learn how to control his emotions and restrain himself. He is welcome to return to the troop as soon as he's accomplished the proposition set before him in direct, crystal-clear terms. The reason why he's not summarily dismissed from the Scouting program is fundamental to Scouting's ultimate purpose: It is to HELP troubled youth; not to weed out all those who aren't paragons of virtue!

Scouting volunteers like you and me aren't trained professionals in psychology or sociology; you're volunteers doing your best to help boys and young men lead themselves in a fun, challenging, adventurous program we call Scouting. This is why you leave it to the aberrant Scout's parents to help him work out his issues. And it's also why you're always prepared for the Scout, when he straightens himself out, to come back and enjoy the program too!

BSA Safety Ruling



There's been a lot of interest in some new activities, specifically Bubbleball, Knockerball™, Zorbing, Battle Ball™, bubble soccer or football, and similar orb activities where participants run into each other or roll around on land or water. So, much, in fact, that the BSA national risk management committee has taken a very serious look at these activities, and the very next online revision of the BSA GUIDE TO SAFE SCOUTING will be making this statement:

Bubbleball, Knockerball™, Zorbing, Battle Ball™, bubble soccer or football, and similar orb activities where participants run into each other or roll around on land or water has been reviewed and is now unauthorized.

Safety Central App lets Parents Act Quickly if a Child Goes Missing



hope you'll never have to use all the features of Safety Central, a new app from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. But if that nightmare scenario of a missing child ever happens, Safety Central could be the most important app on your iPhone or Android device.

The app, which you can download for iOS (<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/safety-central-ncmec/id1153098638?mt=8>) or for Android (<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=org.netsmartz.safetycentral&hl=en>), has three main components:

- Digital Child ID Kit: Save potentially lifesaving information about your children, including photos and digital fingerprint images. Reminds you when it's time to update the photos.
- Missing Children Search: View posters of children missing in your area and make a report if you have any information.
- NCMEC Updates: Stay connected with news, trends and safety tips from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC).

The Boy Scouts of America has been longtime allies with NCMEC and its Netsmartz resource center. Michael Johnson, the BSA's director of Youth Protection, says the Safety Central app is the newest tool in the groups' combined mission to keep young people safe.

"This resource fits well with all aspects of our Youth Protection programs, such as the Cyber Chip, by providing additional safety tips," Johnson says. "Download this free app today, and help protect your child and all youth."

Ju'Riese Colon, executive director of outreach at NCMEC, says the app puts "safety in the palm of your hands."

"It's a great tool for parents and Scout leaders to keep children safer while out and about," she says. "It's a must have for any parent or leader on the go."

How does Two-Deep Leadership Apply When Driving to Scouting Events?



The BSA's top-notch Youth Protection training includes a number of Barriers to Abuse. These policies, which you can review here (www.scouting.org/scoutsource/Scouting/Training/YouthProtection.aspx), provide additional safety for your child and all who are involved in Scouting.

One of these policies is two-deep leadership, which says: "At minimum, two registered adult leaders, or one registered leader and a participating Scout's parent or another adult, are required for all trips and outings. One of these adults must be 21 years of age or older."

So how does "two-deep leadership" apply when driving to and from Scouting events? In other words, are two adults required in each car?

This answer comes from James S. "Jim" Wilson, the volunteer who serves as chairman of the National Youth Protection Committee:

"Two adults are not required per car when traveling to meetings or other Scouting events. That is, as long as the "no one-on-one contact" policy is followed.

So if a parent or unit leader is driving Scouts to a meeting or function, they need to make sure they are not in a one-on-one situation, unless that one youth is their own child."

Drone Safety



Now that drones, or small unmanned aircraft systems (sUAS), are readily available, Scouts and Scouters may be considering incorporating them in an activity or using them to capture photos and videos. BSA local councils may also be considering using them as part of a camp program. We continue to monitor their use and application for future program opportunities.

At this time, we would point potential users to the preface of the Guide to Safe Scouting: “In situations not specifically covered in this guide, activity planners should evaluate the risk or potential risk of harm, and respond with action plans based on common sense, community standards, the Boy Scout motto, and safety policies and practices commonly prescribed for the activity by experienced providers and practitioners.”

If considering the use of a drone follow these recommendations:

- Fly no higher than 400 feet and remain below any surrounding obstacles when possible.
- Keep your sUAS in eyesight at all times, and use an observer to assist if needed.
- Do not intentionally fly over unprotected persons or moving vehicles, and remain at least 25 feet away from individuals and vulnerable property.
- Ensure the operating environment is safe and that the operator is competent and proficient in the operation of the sUAS.
- Do not conduct surveillance or photograph persons in areas where there is an expectation of privacy without the individual’s permission.
- Be aware of and guided by the Sweet 16 of BSA Safety (www.scouting.org/scoutsource/HealthandSafety/Sweet16.aspx).
- Complete a Program Hazard Analysis (www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/680-009.pdf) to identify and be familiar with the hazards and risks associated with this activity. Pay particular attention to the potential legal liability for injuries and invasion of privacy.
- Take a PAUSE (www.scouting.org/filestore/healthsafety/pdf/680-046.pdf) for safety prior to a flight.

Additional risk assessment tools can be found in the Enterprise Risk Management Committee Guidebook, No. 680-026 , Appendix 1 (www.scouting.org/filestore/healthsafety/pdf/680-026.pdf).

Scouts Riding on Parade Floats or Trailers in a Parade



The BSA typically prohibits transporting passengers in the backs of trucks or on trailers, but that rule may be tempered for parade floats or hayrides, as long as the following points are strictly followed to prevent injuries: Transportation to and from the site is not allowed on the truck or trailer; persons riding, whether seated or standing, must be able to hold on to something stationary; legs should not hang over the side. *(from the BSA Health and Safety Team).*

BSA to Prohibit Use of 15 Passenger Vans Made Before 2005



Fully loaded 15-passenger vans, like the ones you might use to haul a bunch of Scouts to camp, can be more dangerous than you might think. The National Highway Transportation Safety Administration says 15-passenger vans with 10 or more occupants are three times more likely to roll over than ones carrying fewer than five passengers.

That's why all Scouters should take heed of this breaking BSA news: Effective Sept. 1, 2015, the use of 15-passenger vans manufactured before 2005 will no longer be allowed in connection with Scouting programs and activities.

15-passenger vans manufactured in 2005 or later may be used, as long as they are equipped with Electronic Stability Control and seat belts for all passengers and the driver. This applies to all vehicles, regardless of ownership (privately owned, owned by chartered organization, rentals, etc.).

Unit/District/National Organization

Understanding the Charter Organization



Every Unit within the Boy Scouts of America has a Charter partner or Charter Organization. These organizations come from within the community in which the unit belongs. It can be a Church, a School, or a Civic group like the Elks, the VFW, or Lions Club just to name a few.

In many cases these organizations sign on to be a Charter Partner without really knowing what their responsibilities or function is. They are approached at some point with the "ask" to be the sponsor of a Scouting unit and because they understand that this is a good idea, they agree.

Charters are granted by the Boy Scouts of America for the period of one year. This contract is able to be renewed annually as long as the Charter Organization meets all of the requirements and agrees to the conditions of the Charter.

Many Charter Organizations and its representatives do not understand their Charter agreement nor do they take the time to really understand the Scouting program. While this is not always the fault of the Charter Partner, often times they just don't know what they don't know, nor do they take the time to learn, the units typically do not create that need for the Charter Partner to learn and gain an understanding of their role.

To most units, the Chartering Partner is just a signature and place to meet. This relationship, while often times meets the needs of the unit and the Chartering Partner is not how the system is designed to work and does not allow for the full benefits of Scouting to be realized.

What is the Key 3?



Behind every great Scouting unit, district, council, area and region is a committed Key 3. These are the three top individuals within each segment of Scouting.

The BSA even has a National Key 3, which includes our national president, Chief Scout Executive and national commissioner. These three individuals — two volunteers and one professional — are responsible for guiding the entire organization.

The Key 3s meet frequently in a quiet situation where successes and concerns can be shared and solutions reached. At every level, from unit to national, each member of the Key 3 needs to understand his or her role and feel empowered to serve.

Unit Key 3

- Unit leader (Cubmaster, Scoutmaster, Venturing crew advisor, Varsity team coach)
- Unit committee chair
- Chartered organization representative

Why isn't the unit commissioner a member of the Key 3? Because the unit commissioner isn't a member of the unit, and he or she serves as an advisor to the unit Key 3.

Like other Key 3s in Scouting, the unit Key 3 meets monthly at the midpoint of unit committee meetings. The Key 3 addresses unit challenges, checks on Journey to Excellence status, and adjusts program and administrative elements to ensure unit progress toward JTE.

The unit Key 3, along with the unit commissioner, reviews Voice of the Scout feedback and makes recommendations to the unit committee to strengthen unit service to youth.

District Key 3

- District chair
- District commissioner
- District executive*

The District Key 3 meets as often as needed — probably twice a month for about an hour. The district's purpose is to support units to ensure that our youth members get the best possible Scouting experience in the safest possible environment.

The best way to accomplish this is to make sure that all units achieve Journey to Excellence goals and that the district achieves JTE goals. District Key 3 members also keep in close telephone or email contact throughout the month and work together to build the agenda for the district committee meeting.

Note: Goose Creek District actually has a Key 4! We also have a District.

On the Relationship between BSA and World Scouting



In physical size, that purple patch above your left pocket is one of the smallest items on your Scout uniform. But in significance, it's one of the biggest.

The purple patch — official name: World Crest — represents the Boy Scouts of America's membership in the World Organization of the Scout Movement, or WOSM. It's worn by registered youth and adult leaders in all of the 161 National Scout Organizations around the world. To find out more about this check out *Bryan on Scouting* blog: <http://blog.scoutingmagazine.org/2015/03/26/purple-patch-relationship-bsa-world-scouting/>

Why Shouting 'Sign's Up' to Quiet Scouts Kind of Defeats the Purpose



Without saying a word, a leader can raise the Scout sign and transform a room of rowdy Scouts into a quiet, attentive group.

Sometimes it takes a few moments, but eventually the Scouts notice the silent signal and raise their sign. Like magic, the effect spreads until everyone quiets down.

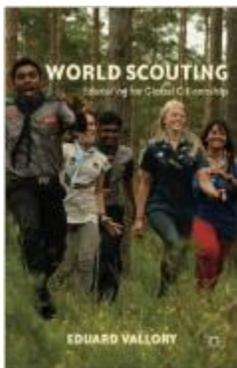
But on a few occasions this act is accompanied by an unnecessary, not-so-silent exclamation: "Sign's up!" Moment over. Magic ruined.

Page 42 of Vol. 1 of the Troop Leader Guidebook says adults should never shout "sign's up" to shush Scouts: "The Scout sign is a silent signal, and getting control of the group is the senior patrol leader's responsibility."

A Cubmaster or senior patrol leader might have to stand up there, sign raised, for 20 seconds or even a full minute for the group to quiet down, but the lesson learned will have been worth it.

Yep, it takes patience to stand there with your arm up, waiting on the Scouts, parents, siblings and sometimes leaders to quiet down and pay attention. But it needs to be done that way. In the end, it's worth it. Eventually, the Scouts will learn that things will go smoother and faster if they are paying attention and quiet down quickly when the sign goes up.

Book - World Scouting: Educating for Global Citizenship



This is the very first book to look at scouting worldwide and explain in a comprehensible way the largest youth movement on the planet, with a presence in over 165 countries on 5 continents. Based on the first academic research on world scouting, it covers the history of boy and girl scouting from its origins to the present, its structure and recognition policy, and its role in developing ideas of global citizenship and belonging. Using new data and storytelling, Eduard Vallory discusses the main elements that distinguish the scout movement all over the world; explains its origin, evolution, operating system, and values; and deals with its controversies.

The book is divided into three parts. The first part deals with the history of World Scouting; the second part is about the ideology of the Scout Movement (WHY and HOW we do Scouting today) and how Scouting is organized in the two world organizations; and the third part deals with the citizenship education of the book's sub-title.

Cost is about \$25 for Kindle, \$26 for paperback, and \$90 for hardcover.

Medical

Have Scouts Who Take Medications? Read These Instructions, Too



Plan ahead. Talk to the Scout's parents. Be smart about storage and labeling.

Taking these steps and others when dealing with a youth member's medication is a vital part of keeping our Scouts and Venturers safe and healthy.

Here's the latest: The July 2016 update to the *Guide to Safe Scouting* (www.scouting.org/scoutsource/HealthandSafety/GSS/toc.aspx) includes some new guidance on medication use in Scouting. It's all covered in this PDF: www.scouting.org/filestore/HealthSafety/pdf/SAFE_USE_OF_MEDICATION_IN_SCOUTING.pdf, and here are some of the highlights from the BSA's Health and Safety team.

8 elements of safe medication use

1. **Annual Health and Medical Record:** Using the Annual Health and Medical Record and listing all medications in the "Health History" section is how information is documented.
2. **Plan:** Having a plan affirmed by the youth, his or her parents and the leader is a huge help — especially with medication that is self-administered or kept by the youth member. A "drug holiday," where parents let their Scout take a break from medications for the weekend, isn't a good plan.
3. **Supervision:** Based on agreement and capacity for self-care, a decision is made on who is responsible for supervision of the medication administration.
4. **Labeling:** If you have ever been handed or had to keep up with medication for 10 to 100 Scouts, you will probably appreciate this guidance: Medication sent on an outing should generally be in the original container and labeled with the name of the participant, medication, dose and strength, prescribing health care provider's name, date of prescription, current instructions for use, special storage, etc. Pharmacies will print out labels on small bottles for such use.
5. **Storage:** Tips — but not prescriptive advice — for securely storing medications include keeping it under "lock and key" (like a locking bank bag) or direct observation. This is especially important for substances that might be subject to theft or abuse.
6. **Emergency medication:** Those inhalers or epi-pens don't do much good locked up. In addition, a buddy may need to help administer in an emergency. It's also critical to make sure everyone understands what happens if emergency use is needed. In many cases this may require evacuation vs. stay and play.
7. **Nonprescription (over-the-counter) medication:** It's not uncommon for such things as Benadryl or ibuprofen to be carried along, and the same planning process described above can apply.
8. **Accountability:** The larger the group, the more complex the plan. Having a system to document when medications were delivered or administered may be needed to keep track of medication.

BSA Immunizations: What's Required, What's Recommended



For the health of all Scouters and Scouts, the Boy Scouts of America follows the recommendations of leading health and pediatric associations in recommending age-appropriate immunizations for members.

Specifically, the BSA requires tetanus shots for anyone attending BSA programs or activities where an annual health and medical record is required. Other age-appropriate immunizations, including those that protect against measles, meningococcal disease, influenza and other maladies are “strongly recommended” by the BSA.

It's all outlined in the “Report of the Immunization Task Force” (www.scouting.org/scoutsource/HealthandSafety/Immunization.aspx) issued by the BSA's National Health and Safety Support Subcommittee. The report is from 2008, but it still stands as gospel today.

The BSA does allow Scouts and Scouters to participate in BSA activities without the required and recommended immunizations, but a medical alert will be marked on their medical forms. That's so health officials can quickly quarantine or isolate them in the event of an emergency.

Those who chose not to receive the tetanus immunization are required to fill out a form releasing the BSA from liability.

Why is a tetanus shot required?

Because our participants are in the outdoors and will get minor cuts and scrapes — in other words, occasions when tetanus might show up. Tetanus, also called “lockjaw,” is usually fatal, and tetanus spores are potentially located everywhere.

Digitizing Medical Records? BSA says Please Don't



Digitally storing photos, books and music means everything's at our fingertips wherever we are. It's convenient, but anyone who follows the news knows it's not exactly secure. That's why there's one thing for sure that doesn't belong in the cloud: Scout medical records.

The rule is clear: Boy Scout Annual Health and Medical Records are not to be digitized, scanned, sent by email or stored electronically by unit leaders.

From Richard Bourlon, the BSA's authority on health and safety:

Districts and councils are discouraged from keeping any medical records, whether digital or paper, unless required by local or state ordinances. However, the electronic version of the Annual Health and Medical Record is intended to be filled out and saved by individual Scouts and Scouters. The electronic version of the Annual Health and Medical Record should not be transmitted via email or stored electronically by units, districts or councils. Units are encouraged to keep paper copies of their participants' Annual Health and Medical Records in a confidential medical file for quick access in an emergency and to be prepared for all adventures.

We have evaluated the risks associated with digitizing and have made a conscious effort not to do it. What you may think seems like such a good idea has many implications on privacy, data transmission, loss, etc., that we are not ready to address. So as an organization have chosen to avoid the risk. Please don't digitize

To see the FAQs for all things related to medical records go to:
www.scouting.org/scoutsource/HealthandSafety/ahmr.aspx

SCOUTStrong Be MedWise Award Encourages Responsible Use of Medicine



Here's a scary stat: Each year, roughly 10,000 children and teens require emergency room visits because of errors in self-medicating. Worse yet, surveys show that 22 percent of teens take over-the-counter medicine without asking an adult.

Something must be done, and the Boy Scouts of America and National Council on Patient Information and Education (NCPPIE) are stepping up and have launched the SCOUTStrong Be MedWise award, which encourages young people to learn about the responsible use of medicine.

Scouts and Venturers who earn the award will learn about the danger of misusing medicines by not following the directions on the label. Once they've done that, they'll receive a nice-looking patch (with an owl on it!). Here's what you need to know:

Who is it for?

This activity and award is recommended for Boy Scouts and Venturers ages 11 to 17; Cub Scouts are probably too young for this discussion. This award is designed to complement existing Boy Scouting and Venturing programming.

How is it earned?

This award's training curriculum consists of four lessons that could be reviewed at the start of a unit meeting, taking no more than 12 to 15 minutes each. The program is self-paced, which allows the unit leader to determine how quickly it is completed.

The SCOUTStrong Be MedWise award is earned through these steps:

1. Review the Curriculum: Have your unit review each of the four lessons in the curriculum (www.scouting.org/scoutsource/BSAFit/MedWise_Award.aspx). This curriculum has been prepared specifically for ages 11-17, and each lesson must be followed specifically as written.
2. Complete the Exercises: Where applicable, have all unit participants successfully complete the activity and/or supplemental exercises for the corresponding SCOUTStrong Be MedWise lesson.

What will Scouts and Venturers learn?

Upon completion of the SCOUTStrong Be MedWise curriculum, youth will be able to do the following:

- Understand what prescription and OTC medicines are, and the ways they are the same and different.
- Learn how to use medicines safely.
- Know what's on the Drug Facts label.

What about the patch and certificate?

- To download a certificate you can print, www.scouting.org/filestore/scoutstrong/pdf/MedWise_Certificate.pdf

To order your SCOUTStrong Be MedWise patch, www.scoutstuff.org/emb-scoutstrong-medwise.html

Finance

Financial Practices for Units: The Unit Budget



Now that many troops and packs are winding down the most active part of their program year and are looking forward to scaling back a bit over the summer, and as adult leadership and committee assignments often change, it's a good idea to review how you do business, from a business standpoint.

While most Scouting units don't fall in the "small business" category, they do tend to handle a fair amount of money during a typical year. For a Cub pack, registration and membership fees and other costs such as insignia can run upwards of \$50 per year per Scout. Add in fundraising proceeds, family camp, Blue & Gold banquet, Pinewood Derby trophies and day camp, and you could hit \$10,000 without much trouble. In a troop, this can skyrocket when you factor in equipment, camping and high adventure. A typical troop can run \$25,000 or more through its checking account in a year's time, and if the troop uses a system of Scout accounts, the amount of cash held in the bank can be substantial.

How, then, does a unit best maintain the safety and accountability of these funds? Check out this Bobwhite Blather blog: <http://bobwhiteblather.com/financial-practices-for-units-the-unit-budget/>

Also check out the BSA's Ideal Year of Scouting planning process. It's centered around popcorn sales as a means of funding your unit, but it's also a valuable budgeting tool. There's a plan for Cub Scout packs (www.scouting.org/scoutsources/CubScouts/resources/packbudget.aspx) and also advice for Boy Scout troops [PDF] (www.scouting.org/filestore/boyscouts/pdf/510-275.pdf).

Financial Practices for Units: Bank Accounts



Bobwhite Blather (<http://bobwhiteblather.com>) is beginning a series of articles where he offers some recommendations on being prepared financially through creating and following an annual unit budget. In this first post, he looks at some banking best practices for your troop or pack:

<http://bobwhiteblather.com/financial-practices-for-units-bank-accounts/>

In his second article he discusses whether your unit holds non-profit status and its implication, including sales tax liability:

<http://bobwhiteblather.com/financial-practices-for-units-non-profit-status-and-sales-tax/>

Bear in mind that he is not an accountant or tax lawyer. The information presented is from personal experience. Also, rules and regulations may vary from state to state. As always, check with council, your chartered organization or a professional if you want definitive advice.

Some Answers to Questions about Scouting Finances



Decisive answers to questions about Scouting finances can be difficult to find. While researching an answer to an email question Clarke Green

(www.ScoutmasterCG.com) found this PDF document:

Fiscal Policies And Procedures For BSA Units dated August 2013

(www.scouting.org/filestore/financeimpact/pdf/Fiscal_Policies_and_Procedures_for_BSA_Units.pdf), that provides answers to most common Scouting financial questions.

The short story is there are very specific policies that are applied in concert with national, state, and local laws. Every unit committee should review their practices and make sure they align with the policies described.

Here's are the some of the questions with excerpts of the answers:..

Should our unit have a checking or savings account?

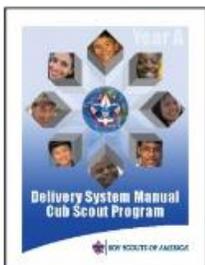
Yes. Unit funds should be deposited in a checking or savings account that requires two signatures on every check or withdrawal. The unit leader could be one of the signees, but it is recommended it be a committee person. It could be that the unit leaders have a petty cash fund (with the limit set by the committee) that is accounted for with receipts each month.

Does a pack or troop need its own tax identification number? If so, where do we get it?

All units need a tax ID number (also referred to as an "EIN"—Employer Identification Number). Units should NOT use the Social Security number of an adult leader. If they do, the IRS will attribute all banking transactions, unit purchases, etc., to that leader as an individual. Units may use the tax ID number of their chartered organization, if given permission. This may be especially useful for the unit if that organization is tax-exempt. Most units obtain their own tax ID number by completing IRS Form SS-4. There is no fee involved. The current form and instructions are available on the IRS website (www.irs.gov). Also, the IRS now allows you to provide the information over the phone and immediately receive a unit EIN. The IRS phone number is 800-829-4933.

Cub Scout

Manual – Delivery System – Cub Scout Program



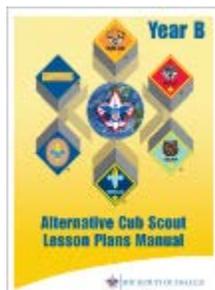
Deliver the promise. This manual consists of the traditional Cub Scout program and can be delivered by volunteers or program managers. This easy-to-use, 36-week guide is suited for mixed-age groups and guarantees rank advancement. It can be implemented in any pack in the country.

For help, call the Membership Recruitment Team at 972-580-2119.

For English, go to www.scouting.org/filestore/membership/pdf/523-006_WB.pdf

For Spanish, go to www.scouting.org/filestore/membership/pdf/521-058_WB.pdf

Manual – Alternative Cub Scout Lesson Plans



Help deliver the promise with the new Alternative Cub Scout Lesson Plans Manual: Year B, www.scouting.org/filestore/membership/pdf/523-021.pdf (please note: huge PDF file, will take a while to download). This follow-up manual to Year A consists of the traditional Cub Scout program and can be delivered by volunteers and program managers. The easy-to-use guide is suited for mixed-age packs/dens and guarantees rank advancement for each Cub Scout.

For more information, please call the Membership Impact Department at 972-580-2119.

Watch This: 'A Brief History of Cub Scouting'



One of the many highlights of the Cub Scout webcasts going over the new advancement requirements was the opening video.

The title of the three-minute piece — “A Brief History of Cub Scouting” — says it all. It's a nice overview for new Cub Scouters and Cub Scouting veterans alike.

Go to the following site to view it:

www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&x-yt-cl=84503534&x-yt-ts=1421914688&v=ogc94pF1U5U

Online Resource – Cubcast



Cubcast is a monthly media file, typically audio or video, featuring a variety of how-to and information topics for Cub Scouting leaders and parents. Sync Cubcast to your iPod, iPhone, Android phone, or favorite MP3 player before your next commute, and watch the miles fly by as your knowledge of the Cub Scout program grows. Or, if you prefer, listen to it right from your computer at home.

To get Cubcasts go to www.Scouting.org/ScoutCast.aspx and select CubCast along the bottom strip of the video display area. On the right side of the display is an 'Archives' button that will let you select previous podcasts.

Online Resource – Baloo's Bugle



Baloo's Bugle (<http://usscouts.org/bbugle.asp>) has been publishing a monthly web magazine for Cub Scout leaders since 1996. It's an extensive compilation of resources from Scouters around the country, Pow-Wow and Scouters' Conference publications, and other sources organized to follow each monthly theme. Think of it as a Roundtable magazine. Baloo's Bugle can be a lifesaver when planning your monthly pack meetings, and you'll find it among your most valuable go-to resources. All the back issues are there and you can use those resources if they fit your den program – the boys will never know!

Online Resource – CubScouts.org



Check out the new CubScouts.org site (<https://cubscouts.org/>), you'll find an official Boy Scouts of America site that links you to everything you need for successful Cub Scouting.

You can shop for gear, get updates about new Cub Scout adventures and requirements, find a pack near you, download recruiting resources, and check out the Learning Library.

It's a constantly growing, indispensable resource that will help you administer a quality program. You'll find info on:

- The basics of den meetings and building strong dens
- Delivering the required and elective adventures
- Den planning, administration and advancement
- Positive youth development
- Working with boys and Cub Scouts with special needs

The Learning Library section for Den Leaders is live now. Sections for Cubmasters, committee members, chartered organization representatives, and parents and guardians are coming soon. As the Learning Library grows, you'll find all the information and resources you need, customized to you and your position within the organization.

BSA pro Bob Scott and the Cub Scout team created a site that's fun, engaging, easy-to-use and — most important of all — full of resources you want and need. But the team's open to feedback. If you have something you'd like to see, or if something isn't working the way it should, contact them at info@cubscouts.org.

What about Cub Hub, the predecessor to CubScouts.org? It's still around, at <https://cubscouts.org/blog/>. And it's still full of fun Scouting ideas and the latest adventures in the world of Cub Scouting.

Online Resource – CubScoutIdeas



This is the time of year when many packs welcome new Cub Scouts and new leaders. Returning Scouts and leaders are tackling a new rank. Most of us are in planning mode, and we're scouring the internet for good ideas. One new site that has come up is www.CubScoutIdeas.com. The site belongs to a Cub Scout mom, Sherry, who loves to find cool projects that fulfill requirements or that are fun for the boys. She especially likes it when those projects are cheap to do.

At Cub Scout Ideas, she has many articles that will be helpful to leaders—both new and experienced—as you get ready for your new year. She has pulled all of them together in one easy-to-use guide that's available only to the site subscribers. And it's totally FREE!

Note: She does accept advertising on her blog. She also participates in affiliate programs which means that if you click on an affiliate link, she will either be paid for referring you there or paid a commission if you make a purchase. From time to time, she writes product review. Some of those reviews are sponsored or she has been given a review copy.

Cub Scouts Swimming or Boating



Good news for Cub Scouts who love to swim, canoe and kayak: the water is just fine.

Contrary to past BSA program design, all Cub Scouts — not just Webelos — may participate in paddle sports as a pack or den; previously, they could only do so at district or council events. And, of course, Cub Scouts may continue to participate in swimming as a pack or den activity.

The Cub Scouting team worked with the Aquatics and Health and Safety committees to relax the council- or district-only requirements for paddle sports. But as adult leaders, you still must make sure that the points of Safe Swim Defense and Safety Afloat are incorporated, including training and staying within the BSA's aquatics framework.

Here's your five-step plan.

Step 1. Learn about aquatics-related Cub Scout adventures.

The new Cub Scout program includes one aquatics-related adventure for each rank, but you'll notice they're all elective, not required. That means Cub Scouts who aren't interested in water activities are fine to stay on dry land.

Step 2. Have a Plan.

Want to enjoy aquatics activities with your pack or den outside of a council or district event? Then you should use the Tour and Activity Plan as a tool for doing so. Forward the completed plan to your council at least 21 days in advance.

Step 3. Have Qualified Supervision.

You know how to swim, so that qualifies you to take your Cub Scouts swimming or boating, right? Not so fast. If you're taking your pack or den swimming or boating, you need to know what you don't know. The good news is you can complete this training online (<https://my.scouting.org/>).

Safe Swim Defense: Any time you take Scouts swimming, even if you're going to a council event or local pool where lifeguards are present, you still need leaders trained in Safe Swim Defense.

Safety Afloat: You are permitted to take Cub Scouts boating as a pack or den. (Previously you could only go boating with your Cub Scouts at district or council events.) But any time you take Cub Scouts boating, you need at least one leader with Safety Afloat training taken within the previous two years. At least one adult leader must be trained in first aid and CPR as well.

Step 4. Learn more.

Learn more about aquatics safety in the *Guide to Safe Scouting* (www.scouting.org/scoutsource/HealthandSafety/GSS/toc.aspx) or the Outdoor Program website for aquatics (www.scouting.org/Home/OutdoorProgram/Aquatics.aspx).

Step 5. Have fun!

Online Resource – CubMaster.org



The US Scouting Service Project, a Scouting website made by Scouters for Scouters, has a site <http://CubMaster.org> that was specifically designed to provide information to Cubmasters. It provides links to many other Scouting resources and provides information on pack organization, ceremonies, advancements, skits, songs, etc.

Surprise, You're the Cubmaster! Here's a Guide to Getting Started



The moment arrives slowly, then all at once. You've been involved with the Cub Scout pack for a few months. You have led a few field trips, brought snacks to a few meetings and even led a pack meeting or two all by yourself.

Then suddenly it dawns on you. You're the Cubmaster.

That all-too-familiar tale happened to Matt Janchar in 2013. He's been Cubmaster of Pack 157 in Weston, Mass., ever since. And whether you're a veteran Cubmaster, new Cubmaster or a Cubmaster-in-training, Janchar has some essential tips to surviving and thriving in this vital role.

Janchar was the guest on the July 2016 edition of CubCast, which you can listen to here (www.scouting.org/Scoutcast/Cubcast/2016.aspx) or by searching "CubCast" on your favorite podcasting app.

Explore Spring! 25 Great Ways to Learn About Spring



If you're interested in putting some STEM oriented outdoor activities into your den meetings check out *Explore Spring! 25 Great Ways to Learn About Spring*.

From tracking spring peepers and raising tadpoles to learning about seeds and recording plant growth, *Explore Spring! 25 Great Ways to Learn About Spring* invites young readers to explore the wonders of spring by becoming scientists in the field. Combining hands-on learning with solid science, trivia, riddles, and terrific illustrations, projects investigate "the reason for the season" and include identifying trees and measuring their growth, recording soil temperature, and observing the forest floor. Bird migration and nest building are covered, and the movement of air and water is studied with experiments in capillary action and in such activities as "Making Parachutes," "Making Kites," and "Mapping Air Currents with Bubbles."

Cost is about \$13 (paperback), \$9 (Kindle)

Snow Rangers



Looking for a fun winter activity for a Webelos den? The US Forest Service has a Junior Snow Ranger program that you can use in a den meeting. This PDF file (www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5354851.pdf) is a great activity book with an application form at the end. It covers science, animals, safety, and a lot more.

Scouts can receive a card, badge, and bandanna upon completing the program.

Cub Scout Campfire Programs: Much More than S'mores!



This is the time of year that Cub Scout packs should be conducting their annual program planning meetings. A valuable element to include in the annual plan is a campfire, whether it is a separate pack meeting or possibly part of a pack campout.

Just as they are for Boy Scouts, pack campfires are a great way encourage the creativity of each Scout and to develop youth leadership skills, as well as a time to relax, unwind, and enjoy the experience of being in the outdoors. A successful campfire should contain fun, entertainment, fellowship, action, adventure, training, and inspiration. The time-tested formula for having a successful campfire is to include the Four S's: Songs, Stunts, Stories, and Showmanship. Leaders should consider a safe campfire area, how to encourage participation by all boys, and most of all, encourage everyone to have safe fun. To ensure that only appropriate materials are used, all materials should be prescreened.

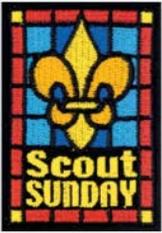
Cubmasters can help den leaders promote advancement for their boys by recognizing the various requirements that can be accomplished during a campfire. For example, the following Adventure requirements are necessary for advancement at each appropriate level:

- Tiger— Tigers in the Wild 5. Participate in an outdoor pack meeting or pack campout campfire. Sing a song and act out a skit with your Tiger den as part of the program.
- Wolf – Call of the Wild 6. On the campout, participate with your family or den in a campfire show. Prepare a skit or song, and then present it at the campfire for everyone else.
- Wolf – Howling at the Moon 3. Work together with your den to plan, prepare, and rehearse a campfire program to present to your families at a den meeting. 4. Practice and perform your role for a pack campfire program.
- Bear – Bear Necessities 2. Attend a campfire show, and participate by performing a song or skit with your den.
- Bear – Roaring Laughter 6. Practice at least two run-ons with your den, and perform them at a pack meeting or campfire program.
- Arrow of Light Adventure: Camper 4. On a pack campout, work with your den leader or another adult to plan a campfire program with the other dens.

Your campfire program should include an impressive opening, songs, skits, a Cubmaster's minute, and an inspirational closing ceremony. Webelos Scouts will be more successful in planning their campfire if their leader helps them use the Campfire Program Planner, which can be found at <http://www.scouting.org/forms.aspx>. There are two parts to the tool, one for general planning, and a second for detailed planning of a specific campfire's program, i.e., skits, songs, etc., as well as responsibilities, ranging from emcee to fire safety and cleanup.

A campfire is a great activity for the pack. It will encourage advancement, engage all Cub Scouts, and bring families together. It is also a great time to get everyone outdoors and to enjoy the beauty of nature.

Plan a Scout Sunday or Scout Sabbath Celebration



Typically held on the Sunday before Feb. 8 (Scouting Anniversary Day), Scout Sunday gives church-chartered units a chance to say thank you and to demonstrate that the unit and the church have similar goals. Scout Sabbath, typically observed on the Saturday after Feb. 8, offers a similar opportunity to units chartered to Jewish congregations. (Mosque-chartered units rarely have equivalent opportunities; Jumu'ah, the time of communal prayer on Fridays, takes place during the school day.)

By participating in worship, you offer a subtle reminder that your unit is a ministry of the congregation, not just an outside group that meets there.

Scout Sunday and Scout Sabbath observances don't have to be elaborate. Still, there are some things you can do to make them as meaningful as possible for both Scouts and members of the congregation.

Why Coordination is Key

First, keep in mind that you are inserting yourself into a worship schedule. The earlier you start to plan, the better. You may find that the first Sunday in February doesn't work—that's OK. Talk with worship leaders to compromise on a date.

If the church or synagogue offers multiple services on the designated day, find out which service is most suitable for Scouts to attend.

Once you have a date confirmed, begin exploring ways the unit (and other Scouting units at the chartered organization) can participate in the worship experience.

Possibilities for Participation

Scout Sunday and Scout Sabbath participation begins with just that: participation. Scouts, Scouters, and family members should attend the service together, probably in reserved pews in a designated part of the sanctuary.

Beyond simple attendance, there are plenty of ways to weave Scouting into the service:

Worship Bulletins: Offer to provide covers for the service's worship bulletin.

ScoutStuff.org sells Scout Sunday bulletin covers, or you could design your own.

Recognition: Whoever handles the greeting and announcements should recognize the Scouts in attendance. Some pastors like to recognize former Scouts as well.

Processional: If the service begins with a processional that includes flags and banners, see if Scouts can participate. Similarly, Scouts who are acolytes could serve this role in uniform.

Greeters and ushers: Have Scouts greet worshipers as they arrive and/or collect the offering during the service.

Readers: If the service involves the reading of Scripture or responsive readings by laypeople, recruit Scouts to handle these tasks.

Religious emblems: If Scouts have earned religious emblems, have the pastor present the badges during the service. This effectively demonstrates the shared values of Scouting and the congregation.

How to Create a Pack Handbook

From *Scouting* magazine, <http://scoutingmagazine.org/2015/04/how-to-create-a-pack-handbook/>



In just a few months, families across America will walk into join-Scouting nights, wide-eyed at the prospect of participating in Cub Scouting. But those wide eyes might glaze over as the Scoutspeak begins. “We just start tossing out ‘den,’ ‘pack,’ ‘Akela’ and all these terms, and they’re looking at us like we’re speaking a foreign language — which we are,” says Cubmaster Perry Lipker of Pack 148 in Hilliard, Ohio.

While it’s smart to rein in the jargon, many packs go a step further by providing families with a pack handbook that introduces them to Scouting in general and their pack in detail. If your pack doesn’t have a handbook, you might want to create one over the summer, when Cub Scouting slows down a bit. Here are some tips to get you started.

Choosing Your Content

A simple handbook would cover these topics:

- Basic Cub Scouting: The program’s purpose, how the pack is structured and how the advancement program works
- Basic pack information: Details on your chartered organization and when and where you meet
- Activities and outings: Information on camping trips, summertime activities, and big events like the pinewood derby and blue and gold banquet
- Leadership: Leadership positions and the role of parents
- Finances: Membership costs, dues and fundraising opportunities
- Uniforms: Where to buy uniforms and where to put patches
- Communications: Details on the pack’s newsletter, Web page and social-media presence
- Pack code of conduct and discipline policy: Highlights of the BSA’s Youth Protection guidelines
- Resources: Information on Boys’ Life and Scouting magazines, the Cub Hub (cubscouts.org) and your local council

Also, think about the questions people often ask you. “If we start seeing a trend of some frequently asked question that’s not answered in the handbook or on the website, we’ll put that into the handbook,” Lipker says.

Keeping Content Up to Date

Some info will change. This year, for example, every pack handbook that describes the Cub Scout advancement program will need a major update. Summer is a good time to make any needed changes.

Don’t just rely on your own eyes, though, because you might see only things that relate to your position. Ask den leaders and committee members to spot things that need to be changed.

Finally, don’t be surprised if you hear from Scouters who want to borrow your work. “I’ve been contacted a dozen times by packs who have found this thing and want a Word copy so they could edit it and make it their own,” Lipker says. “I always tell them: I wish we could take full credit for it, but it’s a work of BSA volunteers across the U.S.”

How to Ask for Help as a Cub Scout Leader



The September CubCast (www.scouting.org/Scoutcast/Cubcast/2015.aspx) has your back. In the latest episode of the monthly podcast, the hosts speak with Heitman, a journalist in Louisiana who is a self-proclaimed “Unlikely den parent.” He explains how to ask for help as a Cub Scout leader.

Heitman is no stranger to asking for help. As a journalist, he’s constantly turning to experts to use as sources in his stories. It’s what journalists do. He approaches Cub Scouting in a similar way.

To teach the boys about recycling, for example, he invited the local waste-disposal company to bring a garbage truck to a meeting. The boys loved it.

For a lesson on safety, he invited someone from the local energy company. They set up a live wire — “in some very controlled circumstances” — and threw hot dogs at it to show the kids just how dangerous electricity can be.

For first aid, someone from the Red Cross showed the boys how to put on a bandage, and the Scouts practiced on each other.

“Half of them looked like mummies,” Heitman said.

What was the takeaway?

“We had a great time, but it really reminded me, this experience, that if you just ask for help, that there’s a world of help out there for you and lots of folks that are really willing and able to help your Cubs reach their full potential,” he said.

Controlling Chaos at Cub Scout Meetings



Let us face the hard truth: Cub Scouts have a natural affinity for chaos. Not only are they easily led into it, but they love it. In fact, the more out of control the situation is, the more Cubs like it. If you ask a Cub Scout whether he enjoyed a chaotic pack or den meeting, he will likely say “yes.” If you ask the attending parent the same question, you will likely get the opposite answer. Sadly, if parents think meetings are out of control, they will be likely to not attend or keep their Cub home the next time. So, if a Cub leader is not a schoolteacher, trained in the art of classroom management, how does he or she maintain an appropriate level of control to accomplish the goals of the meeting, while at the same time allowing the Cubs to have fun?

Addressing this issue are some articles you should look at.

- The September-October 2012 Scouting magazine had an article that has tips from two veteran Scouters on maintaining good behavior during den meetings: <http://scoutingmagazine.org/2012/08/quell-cub-scout-chaos-with-these-good-behavior-techniques/>. At the bottom of the article are replies from other Scouters on some techniques they have used.
- An article by Kimberly Cook (a past Cubmaster and Unit Commissioner) that was done in November 2014: <https://gcook1868.wordpress.com/2014/11/19/controlling-chaos-at-cub-scout-meetings/>

Den Meeting Planning



If you're a den leader, you realize that successful den meetings are planned in advance and have a variety of activities for the boys. The new Adventure program puts everything together so you don't have to try to figure out for yourself how to run your den meetings. The goal is engagement, with advancement as the most visible byproduct.

The November/December 2015 issue of Scouting Magazine has a great article describing steps to planning better den meetings. In the article, Webelos leader David Kampa describes five big ideas for not only making meetings more fun for the boys but easier for you to plan.

If you're a new den leader, your subscription to Scouting might not have started yet, so we recommend you go online and read the article (<http://scoutingmagazine.org/2015/10/five-steps-to-take-for-better-den-meetings/>). Your subscription will start shortly after your adult volunteer application is turned in by your pack leadership, so make sure that they turn it in promptly and don't wait until it's time to recharter.

Top 10 Arrow of Light Ceremonies for Cub Scout

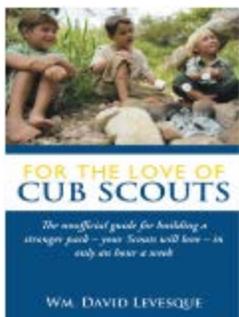


The Arrow of Light (AoL) is the highest rank in Cub Scouting. It is also the only Cub Scout badge that can be worn on the Boy Scout uniform. The requirements to earn the AoL rank can be found here.

Often, packs will hold a special ceremony to honor the Cub Scouts who have earned their Arrow of Light rank. These may include presenting the boy with a plaque and a ceremonial arrow.

You can find many Arrow of Light ceremonies by searching online. To make it a bit easier for you, CubScoutIdeas.com has compiled a top 10 list for you: <http://cubscoutideas.com/5748/top-10-arrow-of-light-ceremonies-for-cub-scouts/>

Book – For the Love of Cub Scouts



Where do you go find answers to Cub Leader questions? Formal training sessions help but the most valuable advice you can receive often comes from those long talks in the parking lot with folks who had been there and done that. Wm. David Levesque's new book, "For the Love of Cub Scouts", contains the hard-won 'between the lines' sort of information and advice that can only come from an experienced Cub Scout Leader.

Levesque provides reassuring, friendly, direction that will help any Cub Scout leader deliver on the promise of Scouting. Chapters on Cub Scout Program Basics, Pack Structure, Pack Program Planning, Budgets and Fund Raising, Recruiting Scouts, Developing Volunteers, Program Ideas, and Running a Pack lay out the program and your place in it in a way that new leaders will find reassuring and will help experienced leaders deal with some of the bigger challenges we all encounter.

Available from Amazon and Barnes & Noble, paperback, for about \$13.

Cub Scout – Blue & Gold

Blue and Gold (The Complete Guide to Working the Scout Market)



This 60 page book is jammed full of the most relevant information you could ever ask for in regards to working not only Cub Scout Blue and Gold Dinners, but also how to work any scouting program and event. This is one of the ONLY books that is devoted solely to giving YOU the information you need to work a market that can generate income for you in the slow times of the year and year round.

If you are already performing for children, work a family-focused show or if you are even a strolling magician, then Blue and Gold Banquets are a perfect extension of what you are already doing. You can learn to work them well with simply modifying your current show and having an understanding of how to market effectively to them. This is what Kyle gives to you and so much more.

This book teaches you not only how to understand the Scout market, but also answers questions that Scout groups are specifically looking for in an entertainer. It shows you step-by-step techniques on exactly how to market to scout groups to land the gigs you want to be doing. Kyle also gives you his full lead generation letter, follow-up letters and full templates that he has used for years to handle all aspects of communication and marketing.

For more information about this book go to:
<http://www.penguinmagic.com/p/S14003>

Planning for the Blue and Gold Banquet



The Boy Scouts of America was incorporated on February 8, 1910, so most packs celebrate our anniversary in February with the Blue and Gold Banquet. According to the BSA website, “the purpose of the blue and gold banquet is to celebrate the pack’s anniversary, thank pack leaders and other adults who have helped the pack, and inspire the leaders, Scouts, and parents.”

There are almost as many kinds of Blue and Gold Banquets as there are packs. Some groups have a full catered meal while others have a potluck dinner and others only serve cake or have an ice cream sundae bar. Regardless of how your pack celebrates, there is some planning involved.

To help in your planning and to see 6 good planning guides that may help you as you prepare go to <http://cubscoutideas.com/2149/blue-and-gold-banquet-planning-guides/>

Yet some blue and gold banquets last longer than *Gone with the Wind*, testing the endurance of boys and parents alike. So check out <http://scoutingmagazine.org/2011/01/make-your-blue-and-gold-banquet-enjoyable/> on how to get everything accomplished and still get the boys in bed on time.

Amp up your Next Blue and Gold with Ideas from Star Wars and More



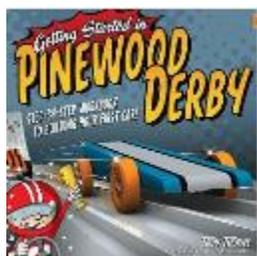
Every February since Baden-Powell was a Cub Scout, packs across the country have held blue and gold banquets to celebrate Scouting's birthday, hand out awards and eat spaghetti. But blue and gold can become blah and old, and the event can turn into a race to see which will run out first: the piles of awards or the patience of Tiger Cubs.

That was not the case with Pack 385 in Sacramento, California. Boys and parents alike had a great time with the pack's *Star Wars* theme:

<http://scoutingmagazine.org/2013/12/amp-next-blue-gold-ideas-star-wars/>

Cub Scout – Pinewood Derby

Book – Getting Started in Pinewood Derby



This colorful workbook goes through all of the steps involved in building a car. One of the best things about the book is that it is directed at Cub Scouts – who should be doing most of the work on their cars. It includes lots of very nice step-by-step photos, so young car builders can understand what needs to be done.

Getting Started in the Pinewood Derby will take the fear out of participating in an inaugural pinewood derby race -- especially if you have no woodworking skills. Unlike any other pinewood book, it's not about building the most spectacular car, or winning the race; it's about spending time with a child building something together. It's about planning the activity so you both have some fun, a few laughs, learn a thing or two about friction and gravity, and walk away with a car you can both be proud of...even if it isn't perfect. *Getting Started in the Pinewood Derby* will eliminate any anxiety about the upcoming race because it will remind you that the race is not about the adults, it's about the kids. And what kid doesn't want to have fun? In the end, *Getting Started in the Pinewood Derby* will help kids and adult have a stress-free, good-time building a car that will get down the track. Maybe next year, you can worry about taking home first place.

Available from Amazon, \$10 paperback.

How to Host a Pinewood Derby Workshop with Your Pack



WHEN 90 PERCENT of your Cub Scouts show up at an event, you must be doing something right. That was the case last February when Pack 402 in Urbana, Ill., held its first pinewood derby workshop. Offered a few weeks before the pack's annual race, the Saturday workshop offered apartment dwellers, single moms, and not-so-crafty dads access to the tools and expertise some Cub Scout families take for granted. Read more at:

<http://scoutingmagazine.org/2015/12/host-a-pinewood-derby-workshop/>

How to Host a Pinewood Derby Workshop with your Pack



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"Parents were sort of frustrated because they didn't know where to start," says Cubmaster Tori Exum. "It was like, 'You've given me this block of wood; what do I do with it?'"

At the workshop, boys and their parents learned just what to do with their blocks of wood. Pack and community volunteers were on hand to help families with every step, from planning to painting. Some boys arrived with nothing but an idea and left a few hours later with a finished car. Others dropped by on the way to various activities to get help with roughing out their cars, leaving the sanding and painting for later.

A similar scene plays out each spring in David McRae's Cedar Falls, Iowa, garage. McRae, the Cubmaster of Pack 55, has hosted annual derby workshops since he took over the pack three years ago. "I just wanted people to have a good solid start on figuring out the right ways to do things," he says.

Just Like Henry Ford

McRae and Exum both use an assembly-line approach, dividing their workspace into stations for different tasks. The typical Cub Scout starts at the design table, where he sketches his dream machine onto a car-size template. After an adult makes sure the design isn't impossible, the boy transfers it to wood.

Then, it's on to the cutting station, where the Scout either uses a coping saw or hands off his block to an adult to cut out on a band saw. (Note: It's not appropriate for Scouts of any age to use power tools.)

From there, it's on to the sanding station. Once the car is as smooth as time and patience will permit, he takes it to the weigh station, where he can check it on an official scale and add extra weight if needed. The final step is the paint station, where the Scout paints and then blow-dries his car.

Boys also can add wheels to their cars at the workshop, but McRae says doing so could cause problems. "If you get the car completely done, they'll go home and play with it," he says. "A lot can happen in a couple of weeks' time."

Centering on the Scout

Exum says the workshop has an added bonus: It reduces the number of dad-built cars in her pack's derby.

Keeping Pinewood Derby 'Dynamos' Under Control on Race Day

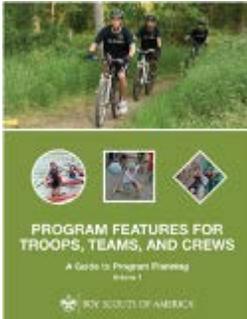


How can you keep rowdy Cub Scouts occupied when not involved in racing their pinewood derby cars? Some Scouting magazine readers suggested a variety of activities, competitions, and of course, plenty of good eats:

<http://scoutingmagazine.org/2015/12/scouters-speak-keeping-derby-dynamos-under-control-on-race-day/>

Boy Scout

Manual - The Next-Gen Program Features for Troops, Teams and Crews



Program Features for Troops, Teams, and Crews is a three-volume set containing a total of 48 unique topics that a Scouting unit could use as either the core of its activities, or as a way to round out what's already on the calendar.

The features cover six general categories: Outdoor, Sports, Health & Safety, Citizenship & Personal Development, STEM, and Arts & Hobbies. You can find program ideas for SCUBA, Science, Multimedia, Fitness & Nutrition and more.

The idea of having a “go-to” resource for youth leaders isn’t new. Many of us recall the old *Woods Wisdom*, which evolved into the *Troop Program Features* and the *Varsity Team Program Features*. Each of these publications provided introductions and outlines for unit level program. Even the first *Venturing Leader Manual* contained a number of tools to help plan activities.

While each of these publications provided great resources, they were aimed at our adult leaders, rather than the youth. And to be quite honest, they needed a facelift. That’s where the new Program Features for Troops, Teams and Crews comes in.

The development team has worked closely with the other program task forces to make sure that the information in these new books aligns with the changes to Venturing and the upcoming 2016 changes to the Boy Scouting program.

Volume 1 (item No. 616351), which includes the first 16 program features, is available at your local Scout shop or at www.scoutstuff.org. Volume 2 is due out in the next couple of months with Volume 3 to follow by the middle of 2015.

Volume 1

- Camping
- Climbing and Rappelling
- Communication
- Cycling
- First Aid
- Games
- Geocaching
- Hiking
- Outdoor Ethics
- Paddle Sports
- Pioneering
- Rifle Shooting
- Safety
- Science
- Snowboarding and Skiing
- Spectator Sports

Volume 2

- Archery
- Backpacking
- Citizenship
- Engineering
- Fishing
- Fitness and Nutrition
- Living History
- Mathematics
- Mentoring
- Music
- Orienteering
- Scuba Diving
- Soccer
- Special Needs Awareness
- Wilderness Survival
- Wildlife Management

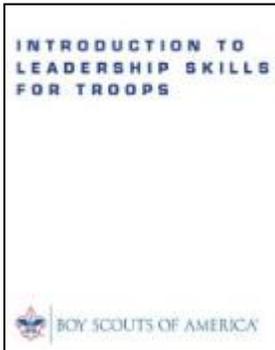
Volume 3

- Caving
- Cooking
- Duty to God
- Emergency Preparedness
- Ethics
- Financial Management
- Multimedia
- Nature and Environment
- Project COPE
- Project Planning
- Shotgun Shooting
- Skateboarding
- Sustainability
- Swimming
- Technology
- Winter Camping

For a sample (first page only) of the First Aid program feature go to:

<http://i1.wp.com/blog.scoutingmagazine.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2015/01/Science-program-features-first-page.jpg>

Manual – Introduction to Leadership Skills for Troops



Training boy leaders is the Scoutmaster's most important job, and that process has now been revised and updated in BSA's new publication *Introduction to Leadership Skills for Troops*.

ILST, as it's known in the acronym-crazy world of Scouting, succeeds Troop Leadership Training (TLT) after only a few years in use, and improves on it in a number of ways. TLT, as you recall, took us away from the step-by-step training course that was provided to us in Junior Leader Training. It replaced initiative games and discussions with a three-step "Be-Know-Do" philosophy based on the sections of the Scoutmaster Handbook on training the senior patrol leader, patrol leaders, and other youth leaders. The attempt to map "Be-Know-Do" to the material contained in the three sections wasn't quite successful, in that there were a lot of Knows in section one, a few Dos in section two, and so on. It took several readings through the guidebook to figure out exactly what it was that we were intended to do. A worthwhile improvement was the addition of the position description cards, which listed the job duties of each position on one side and afforded the Scout an opportunity to list his vision and plan on the backside.

ILST takes us back to a more structured program that will hopefully make things clearer for both the Scoutmaster and the Scouts being trained. Possibly realizing that boys do like games, they've brought back initiative and teambuilding activities as part of the program, and have even offered supplemental and alternate games so we can change it up from time to time. Of course, in Scouting it's not a game without a purpose, so a guide to reflection is included to coach the Scoutmaster and others doing the training in how to have a discussion about what was learned and how it can be applied.

The course has also been reorganized. While most of the elements outlined in TLT are included in ILST, the sequence has been changed into a more logical arrangement – one that answers the new youth leader's need to "give me what I need to know now."

Scoutmasters should download the new training syllabus and read through it well in advance so they can be prepared to conduct this training after the next troop elections. The syllabus can be found at:

www.Scouting.org/filestore/training/pdf/ILST%20FINAL%202011%20-%20Item%20Number%20511-016.pdf

Online Resource – ScoutCast

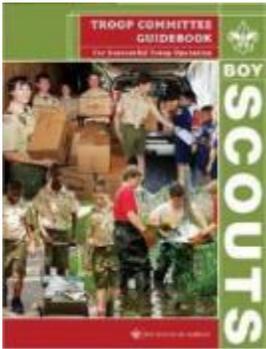


Scouters love to shoot the breeze about the next campout, newest merit badge, or tastiest recipe. But when someone brings up a more-sensitive topic at a roundtable or leader meeting, it's often greeted by silence.

That's where the new ScoutCast (www.Scouting.org/ScoutCast.aspx) comes in. The new podcast, a close relative of the popular CubCast, will focus on topics that you might not feel comfortable talking about at roundtable meetings, such as bullying.

The goal: Get you and your fellow Scouters thinking and, ideally, talking about these critical issues facing Boy Scouts.

Manual – The New Troop Committee Guidebook



You may not have noticed, but earlier this year the Scout shops and Supply Division replaced the Troop Committee Guidebook with a new edition. The previous version, item 34505B, was originally published in 1998 and was reprinted several times since. The new version has a bright red and green cover with photos of Scouts in action, carries a stock number of 616928 and was published in 2013, though it didn't become widely available until spring of this year.

Normally, revised publications have many changes and updates. In the case of the Guidebook, however, there are few major changes. The chapter headings remain unchanged as does most of the content. The biggest difference is in an increased emphasis on youth protection. Other updates include available training, the names of some forms and publications, and additional committee positions.

Should you go out and purchase a new copy? If you always want the latest version of publications, sure. It's only a few dollars and you'll have information that was current as of last year. If not, you're fine if you've kept up with the changes to youth protection requirements, know about online Troop Committee Challenge training and have a well-functioning committee.

Book – The Scoutmaster's Other Handbook



With his first book Mark Ray revolutionized the Eagle Scout court of honor, showing tens of thousands of readers how to make Scouting's greatest moment truly great. Now, he turns his attention to an even bigger task: building great Boy Scout troops.

In this unique and highly personal book (also available in a Kindle edition), Mark offers hundreds of proven ideas for building strong, successful, sustainable troops that truly achieve the promise of Scouting. Beginning with Scouting's aims and methods, the book moves quickly through every aspect of the program, from troop meetings and outings to fundraising and administration.

You'll learn:

- How to recruit and retain Scouts and leaders
- Techniques for nearly painless fundraising
- Suggested board-of-review questions for every rank
- Tips for developing troop newsletters and Web sites
- Ideas for strengthening patrol operations

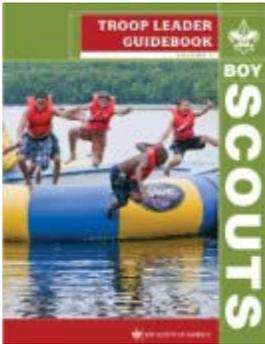
Where to find dozens of print and online resources

Book – Beginning Boy Scouts



Jeremy C. Reed and Heather R. Reed have compiled real-world experience and first-hand knowledge of the Boy Scouts of America program in a new book designed as an essential guide for parents and new leaders. In "Beginning Boy Scouts" (ISBN 9781937516017), the Reeds provide instruction and advice to help both youth and adult participants understand scouting goals, terminology, requirements and more. This unofficial guide to the Boy Scouts of America program explains the youth leadership model and answers commonly asked questions on topics ranging from camping to uniforms.

Manual - 'Troop Leader Guidebook,' the Scouter's Instruction Manual, Now Available



You wouldn't lead a hike without consulting a map. So don't lead a Boy Scout troop without consulting the *Troop Leader Guidebook*.

Volume 1 of the BSA's top resource for Scoutmasters, assistant Scoutmasters, committee members and involved parents is now available for \$13 at ScoutStuff.org (www.scoutstuff.org/book-troop-ldr-gde-vol-1.html) and your local Scout Shops.

The *Troop Leader Guidebook* replaces the Scoutmaster Handbook. The latter contained great content, but its title was always a little misleading.

"We changed the name because surveys indicated that many assistant Scoutmasters thought the Scoutmaster Handbook wasn't for them," says Mark Ray, an Eagle Scout and award-winning author who has written for the BSA since 2005.

The *Troop Leader Guidebook* is, in fact, for everyone. That includes a leader crossing over from Cub Scouting to Boy Scouting, a new-to-Scouting Boy Scout leader, a Scouting veteran, a troop committee member and a parent who isn't currently registered but wants more information about his or her son's troop.

What's inside the *Troop Leader Guidebook*, Volume 1?

- Section 1: Boy Scout Basics. An introduction to Boy Scouting, including aims, methods, ideals, troop structure, and membership and leadership requirements.
- Section 2: The Boy Scout Program. An introduction to the elements of the troop program and program planning, including camping and other outings.
- Section 3: All About Youth. Working with every Scout from the new recruit to the senior patrol leader.
- Section 4: All About Adults. Working with every adult from the new parent to the troop committee chairperson.
- Section 5: Advancement and Awards. An introduction to the youth advancement program and the array of awards Scouts, adults, and units can earn.
- Section 6: Troop Administration. An introduction to troop administration from a Scoutmaster corps perspective, including financing the troop, chartered organization relationships, and communications.
- Section 7: Health and Safety. A comprehensive overview of the BSA's safety and risk-management policies.

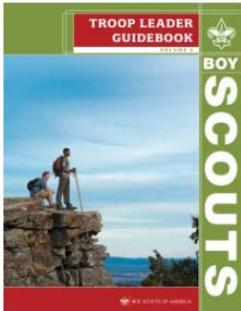
Tools for Setting Goals with JTE



As we kick off another year in Scouting, your troop's PLC might want to spend some time setting goals using the framework of JTE. If you're unfamiliar with this program or why you should be using it, read this post first:

<http://blog.myscoutstuff.org/2012/01/set-scouting-goals-with-bsa-journey-to-excellence/>. If you're already following JTE and open to a potential process improvement, take a look at these ideas to see if they might help your PLC set and accomplish goals in 2014: <http://blog.myscoutstuff.org/2014/01/tools-for-setting-goals-with-jte/>

Troop Leader Guidebook – Volume 2



Once you've mastered the basics of Boy Scouting, it's time to level up.

That's the goal of Volume 2 of the *Troop Leader Guidebook*, the BSA's publication for experienced leaders that addresses topics like self-evaluation, succession planning, leadership styles, high adventure, working with older Scouts, working with Scouts with disabilities, counseling, conflict resolution and more.

It's due in Scout Shops and at ScoutStuff.org by the end of June.

Volume 1 of the *Troop Leader Guidebook* covered the nuts and bolts of Boy Scouting. Topics include troop meetings, uniforms and insignia, community service, awards and recognition programs, and more.

Volume 2 addresses the needs of experienced troop leaders — mainly people who have been involved in Boy Scouting for a few years. That's notable because it's the first time the BSA has created a publication exclusively aimed at seasoned Scouters.

The Best Scouting Apps of 2016



It's 2016. The smartphone doesn't detract from the Scouting experience; it enhances it.

Where in the past there was a debate over whether smartphone use is appropriate in Scouting, these days most Scouters see the devices like pocketknives. They are multitools that — with guidance to prevent misuse — are an important part of the Scouting experience.

With the right apps, your smartphone becomes a navigation device, sous chef, first-aid adviser, weather radio, camera and reference library. All inside a pocketable rectangle of glass, plastic and metal.

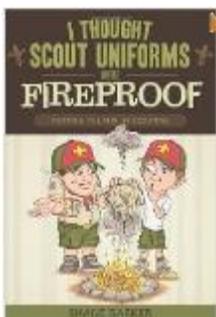
But which are the "right apps"? A fair question, given that the Google Play and Apple App Store each house more than 2 million of them.

For this list, Bryan on Scouting (<http://blog.ScoutingMagazine.org>, BSA's official blog for adult leaders) tapped Scouting magazine's Facebook audience and consulted with Doug Goldring, an assistant Scoutmaster in the National Capital Area Council who compiled a list of Scouting apps for a Wood Badge ticket item.

Here's the list with links to download them:

<http://blog.scoutingmagazine.org/2016/10/03/the-best-scouting-apps-of-2016/>

Book – Thought Scout Uniforms Were Fireproof!



From a User Review: The focus of this book is truly to put the fun back into scouting. It is a quick read, filled with ideas for breaking out of doing 'the usual' for your troop meetings, camp outs, and while working on merit badges. I enjoyed it and as a Roundtable Commissioner, I think I'm going to pick up a couple extra copies to give out at our Boy Scout Roundtable.

Fair warning, it is aimed at LDS Scouting, but with that said there are not very many of the ideas that are directed specifically for LDS troops. Many of the thoughts can be applied to any troop out there.

Available from Amazon for about \$9.

Can Scouts, Venturers Drive Themselves To/From Events?



Getting to and from Scouting events is by far more dangerous than participating in the program. That's why the Boy Scouts of America's *Guide to Safe Scouting* offers specific guidelines to help adults transport Scouts safely. But what about older Scouts and Venturers with driver's licenses? Is it OK for them to drive themselves and others to meetings, weekend campouts, unit activities, area/regional/national events and more?

Here's what Richard Bourlon, the BSA's Health and Safety team leader, and Mark Dama, head of Insurance and Risk Management, have as answers to these questions.

Can a Scout Drive to/from a troop or crew meetings?

This one qualifies as "not applicable." That's because, as Bourlon says, "Driving to or from a standard meeting place isn't an official Scouting activity or part of any tour planning." Adds Dama, "It's similar to you going to work and coming home from work. You are not considered an employee at both of those times."

Can a Boy Scout drive to a troop overnighner?

No. The *Guide to Safe Scouting*, specifically point No. 3 under Automobiles, says: "The driver must be currently licensed and at least 18 years of age." If he's 18, he's not a Boy Scout, and so this rule is quite clear. Exceptions for youth Boy Scouts include traveling to and from an area, regional or national Boy Scout activity. More on that later.

Can a Boy Scout drive other Scouts to a troop overnighner?

No. See above explanation.

Can a Boy Scout transport troop equipment?

No. Same reasoning, Dama writes: "If they did, the troop equipment belongs to the chartered organization, which probably wouldn't want a youth driving gear around. Do the mom and dad of the son have an appropriate level of automobile liability insurance coverage if their son has an accident and there are other youth in his vehicle? Scouting youth (under age 18) are not insured under the BSA Commercial General Liability policy." That last sentence is a direct quote from the *Guide to Safe Scouting*, and it explains why this rule exists.

Can a Boy Scout drive himself to/from an area, regional or national event?

Yes, assuming he's at least 16 years old and meets the *Guide to Safe Scouting* rules.

What about Venturers? Can they drive themselves?

Yes, a Venturer can drive himself/herself to any Venturing event as long as the event is under the leadership of an adult (at least 21 years of age); the Venturer is at least 16 years old and meets the *Guide to Safe Scouting* rules.

Why is this policy in place?

Motor vehicle accidents are one of the most frequent severe incidents we see in Scouting," Bourlon says. "Going to and from events is far more dangerous than our program. We have resources such as the Risk Zone training that Scouters should review." www.scouting.org/filestore/HealthSafety/pdf/632-006_WB.pdf

Troubleshooting the Patrol Method



This is a self assessment tool, developed by Scoutmaster Clarke Green (www.scoutmastercg.com) to help gauge how well a troop applies the patrol method. It may be a good idea to have several adults and youth troop members complete the assessment and discuss the results. This is not very scientific but it will at least give you an idea of where you are. Here's a PDF version you can download: www.scoutmastercg.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/patrol-system-self-assessment-tool.pdf

Chose only one option for each pair of statements

PATROL SYSTEM	ALWAYS	MOST TIMES	SOME TIMES	ALWAYS	NO PATROL SYSTEM
PATROL STRUCTURE					
Patrol membership is stable	+10	+5	-5	-10	Patrol membership is reshuffled
Patrol Leaders are elected by patrol members	+10	+5	-5	-10	Patrol Leaders are not elected by patrol members
Patrols participate as a 'natural' patrol	+10	+5	-5	-10	Patrols often formed provisionally or combined
Patrol has APL, Scribe, Quartermaster	+10	+5	-5	-10	Patrols do not have APL, Scribe, Quartermaster
Patrols have eight to ten members	+10	+5	-5	-10	Patrols have less than eight members
PATROL LEADER'S COUNCIL					
PLC meets with Scoutmaster observing	+10	+5	-5	-10	Adults actively participate in PLC meetings
PLC plans meeting/outings	+10	+5	-5	-10	Adults plan meetings/outings
Senior Patrol Leader is elected by Scouts	+10	+5	-5	-10	Senior Patrol Leader is appointed by Adults
Youth leaders trained in on-going process	+10	+5	-5	-10	Youth leaders trained only at training events
Patrol Leader's Council meets regularly	+10	+5	-5	-10	Patrol Leader's Council meets sporadically.
PROGRAM					
Lots of time for Patrols at Troop meeting.	+10	+5	-5	-10	Little time is for Patrols at Troop meeting.
Regular inter/Patrol games and competitions	+10	+5	-5	-10	No inter/Patrol games and competitions
Patrols plan, purchase and prepare their meals.	+10	+5	-5	-10	Patrols don't plan, purchase and prepare meals.
Patrols camp in their own campsite/area	+10	+5	-5	-10	Patrols don't camp in their own campsite/area
Patrols have independent meetings/activities	+10	+5	-5	-10	No independent Patrol meetings/activities
ADULT INVOLVEMENT					
Scouts are mostly instructed by other Scouts	+10	+5	-5	-10	Scouts are mostly instructed by adults
Adults rarely direct Scouts	+10	+5	-5	-10	Adults often direct Scouts
Adults rarely involved at Troop meetings	+10	+5	-5	-10	Adults often involved in Troop meetings
Adults rarely 'veto' or alter Scout's plans	+10	+5	-5	-10	Adults often 'veto' or alter Scout's plans
Adults are trained	+10	+5	-5	-10	Adults are untrained

**150 -200 – GOOD GOING!
100 – 150 – KEEP GOING!
100 OR LESS – GET GOING**

Now's the Time for Advanced Leadership Training



You'll notice the difference right away.

A fellow Scouter who has returned from Wood Badge brings back a quiet confidence. He or she is ready for anything Scouting — or life — might bring.

A Scout or Venturer freshly back from National Youth Leadership Training stands a little taller. He or she now has tools to improve the troop or crew, making your job easier.

It's all within reach for adults and youth who sign up for advanced leadership training. The time is now to begin (or expand on) a culture of training in your unit. The expectation is lofty but attainable: Every adult leader takes Wood Badge. Every youth leader takes National Youth Leadership Training, or NYLT.

The importance of advanced leadership training, that next step after basic training, is the subject of the latest episode of ScoutCast, the monthly podcast for Boy Scout and Venturing leaders. The guest this month: Don Wendell, former chairman of the National Advanced Leadership Task Force.

In the ScoutCast, Wendell shares several reasons why advanced leadership training is so crucial:

- It results in better programs and a better experience for the youth, helping them get the most out of the program.
- It improves retention. If you give Scouts a better experience, they'll stay in longer.
- It gives Scouts and Venturers leadership skills they can use in Scouting and school.
- It helps adults feel at ease and better prepared to be effective leaders.
- It makes everyone more effective in dealing with other people.

The list continues from there. Just ask any Wood Badge or NYLT graduate; they'll tell you.

The beauty of Scouting's advanced leadership training courses, Wendell says, is in their alignment. Courses for adults and courses for youth, while conducted separately, are designed to fit together once everyone gets back to their troop or crew.

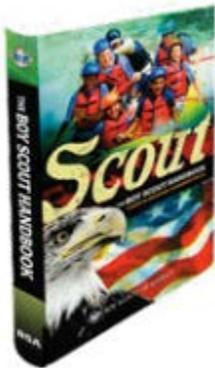
"The courses are aligned so that the Scoutmaster who has been to Wood Badge and his senior patrol leader who's been to NYLT are speaking at the same language of leadership," he says.

Take the next step toward improving your pack, troop, team, post, ship or crew. Contact your council to register for Wood Badge or learn more about National Youth Leadership Training.

And get much more insight on this subject in the October 2015 edition of ScoutCast, available to read or listen to here:

www.scouting.org/Scoutcast/Scoutcast/2015.aspx

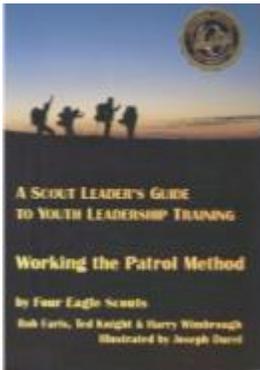
The 14 Things Every Boy Scout Troop Library Needs



Your library could be physical, or it could be virtual. Either way, a well-stocked one helps make your troop the best it can be.

1. **Boy Scout Handbook** - The primary resource for Boy Scouts (and for Scout leaders who need to learn basic Scouting skills). \$12 (perfect-bound) or \$17 (coil-bound) at Scout Shops and ScoutStuff.org.
2. **Fieldbook** - A companion volume to the Boy Scout Handbook that covers advanced outdoor skills. \$20 (perfect-bound) or \$27 (coil-bound) at Scout Shops, ScoutStuff.org or Amazon.
3. **Troop Leader Guidebook** (Volumes 1 and 2) - The primary resource for Scoutmasters, assistant Scoutmasters, committee members and involved parents. Volume 1 is out now, and Volume 2 is due out this winter. \$13 at Scout Shops and ScoutStuff.org.
4. **Troop Committee Guidebook** - The primary resource for troop committee members. Topics include the organization of Scouting, recruiting adult leaders, troop finances, running committee meetings and more. \$7 at Scout Shops and ScoutStuff.org.
5. **Troop Program Resources** - Games, ceremonies, Scoutmaster's minutes and more. Free, via this PDF: www.scouting.org/FILESTORE/pdf/33588.pdf.
6. **Program Features** (Volumes 1, 2 and 3) - Complete monthly program features, including meeting plans, outing ideas and resources. I previewed these here. \$15 for Volume 1 at Scout Shops and ScoutStuff.org. Volumes 2 and 3 are expected later this year. In the meantime, you can use the existing Program Features: Volume 1, Volume 2 and Volume 3.
7. **Boy Scout Requirements** (current year) - Requirements for ranks, merit badges, and special awards. Updated annually. \$6 at Scout Shops and ScoutStuff.org or available online.
8. **Guide to Awards and Insignia** - A comprehensive guide to wearing uniforms and badges correctly. \$7 at Scout Shops and ScoutStuff.org or available online.
9. **Guide to Advancement** - The official source for administering advancement in all Boy Scouts of America program phases. (Read about the big changes in the 2015 edition.) \$12 at Scout Shops and ScoutStuff.org or available online.
10. **Guide to Safe Scouting** - The primary source for information on conducting Scouting activities in a safe and prudent manner. Regularly updated and available online.
11. **Patrol Leader Handbook** - The official guide for patrol leaders. \$12 at Scout Shops and ScoutStuff.org.
12. **Senior Patrol Leader Handbook** - The official guide for senior patrol leaders and other troop-level youth leaders. \$12 at Scout Shops and ScoutStuff.org.
13. **Scouting magazine** - The official magazine for Scout leaders; published five times a year.
14. **Boys' Life magazine**

Book – Working the Patrol Method



A Scout leader's guide to youth leadership training: Working the Patrol Method is the best work on the patrol method since 'Green Bar' Bill Hillcourt's *Handbook for Patrol Leaders* last published in 1965 or Baden Powell's *Aids to Scoutmastership* originally published in 1920. Authors Rob Faris, Ted Knight and Harry Wimbrough have created an indispensable tool for understanding, implementing and maintaining Scouting's centrally important concept, the patrol, in the 21st century.

The guide is arranged into ten sections;

- Section 1 “Understanding and Telling ‘The Why’ ” logic of leadership, leadership training.
- Section 2 “‘The Why’ of Scout Leadership Training” historical perspective of Scouting and leadership training methods.
- Sections 3 and 4 “The Patrol Method” advice and guidance in training Scouts to lead themselves.
- Section 5 “Striving for Excellence: Doing Your Best” motivating Scouts to do their best.
- Section 6 “Caring Leadership” ethical decision-making, servant leadership.
- Section 7 “Planning: How to Facilitate It Without Taking Over” Mentoring Scouts in attaining this essential life skill without overshadowing their efforts.
- Section 8 “Shared Leadership” delegating, situational leadership and shared leadership.
- Section 9 “Techniques that Support the Patrol Method” special topics useful to training leaders.
- Section 10 “Create Your Personal Legacy of Leadership” A long-term perspective of the adult role in Scouting.

Central principles are illustrated by yarns (stories) that narrate the common challenges of leadership and explained using Baden-Powell's founding vision, Green-Bar Bill Hillcourt's writings and relevant thoughts from prominent leaders. Any scout leader is sure to gain immediate, practical knowledge for improving their application of the patrol method.

What to do When a Scout Won't say the Pledge of Allegiance: A Discussion Topic



Few things seem as quintessentially American as the Pledge of Allegiance. Formally adopted by Congress during World War II (and amended in 1954 to include the words “under God”), the pledge has long been a fixture of civic gatherings, school assemblies and Scout meetings. It has also been a source of controversy, perhaps most notably when the Supreme Court ruled in 1943 that forcing Jehovah's Witnesses to recite it in school would be a violation of their religious beliefs.

The pledge is also a source of controversy. What do you do when a Life has begun refusing to recite it, calling it meaningless because, he says, “the United States has an inconsistent record of providing liberty and justice for all.” When the troop recites the pledge, he now stands without saluting or saying a word.

Look at this article for how you could discuss this situation with your Scouts about the Pledge of Allegiance and Scouting:

<http://scoutingmagazine.org/2016/02/what-to-do-when-a-scout-wont-say-the-pledge-of-allegiance/>

Permanent On-Line World Jamboree



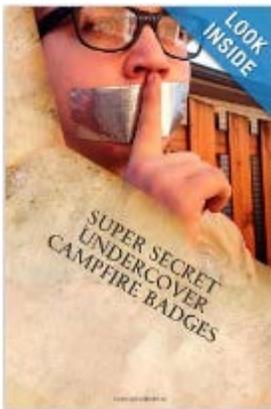
If you haven't visited <http://Scout.org> (the website of The World Organization of the Scouting Movement, WOSM) in a while you are in for a big surprise!

For the last ten months we have been reviewing and analyzing feedback from our readers, which resulted in the developing of an innovative concept for our Movement's web presence", recalls Srinath Tirumale, from WOSM's World Scout Bureau in Geneva, who co-leads the core team responsible for this relaunch, "and today, a radically new website saw the day.

We are offering open, easily accessible on-line space 24 hours per day, seven days per week and 365 days per year. Our national Member Organizations and their youth members can showcase the richness of diversity our Scout Movement is known for. Stories of past activities, current projects and future events can be shared by Scouts directly involved: everyone is a user and everyone is a contributor, everyone can reach out to 40 million other Scouts around the world!

A user-generated interface is at the center of the new scout.org, with members of our Movement from all levels – local, regional and global, as well as volunteers and staff – providing stories, images, videos or any other piece of communication they want to share with others. Just like at a real World Scout Jamboree. But potentially with some 40 million participating Scouts, instead with only some 40000 lucky ones attending the Jamboree in Sweden in 2011.

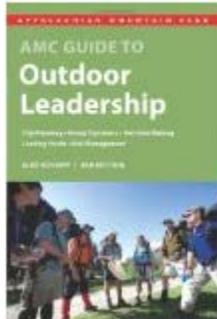
Book – Super Secret Undercover Campfire Badges



Super Secret Undercover Campfire Badges is the concept of Greg Cieply - a veteran of the scouting program. After spending many days and nights camping with his own troop as well as years at weekly troop meetings, he realized that there were certain topics that have loads of value and import for young men but are just never taught - and sometimes just don't fit. Seeing that young boys needed to know about these "other" things - often "Secret" things - he decided to fulfill this need and his desire to make learning fun and intellectually energizing. In this process he realized that while mental development and character building were occurring, strong bonds were also developing through associations and connections. Bonds that would pay dividends for many years to come in the lives of these boys. His dream was to create a quick and easy way to not only cram more information into the short period of time he had with his scouts, but to get everyone involved and learn through teaching. This book is a self-empowering resource, which will help all boys learn something new, make some new friends and grow even deeper relationships with other scouts, friends and leaders. Inspired by the respected merit badge program of the Boy Scouts of America, each "Campfire" badge will take a much shorter period of time to complete and includes step by step instructions for achieving these simple and fun activities. Boys from 11-17 and older will enjoy learning how to do standup comedy, understand fine dining, the ins and outs of duct tape and much much more.

Available from Amazon (paperback) for \$7

Book – AMC Guide to Outdoor Leadership



Review by Clark Green, www.scoutmastercg.com/amc-guide-to-outdoor-leadership/

Outdoor leadership is different. Good administrative skills go just so far when leading a group in an extended outdoor experience. What works at a Troop meeting or in the boardroom does not always translate well on a week-long backpacking or canoeing trip. Scouting offers great administrative training and valuable supplemental training in outdoor skills and safety. What we don't have is a comprehensive training course in the group dynamics of long-term outdoor trips.

Author Alex Koseff is has assembled what I would call a college level course for leaders in the AMC (Appalachian Mountain Club) Guide to Outdoor Leadership. It is notoriously difficult for most of us to find, let alone attend, a course in outdoor leadership; they are few and far between. Simply reading the AMC Guide is not a substitute for more experiential training, but it goes a long way towards developing some useful skills.

I attribute the success of our annual extended canoe trips with studying the first edition of the guide. The practical, effective approach to the challenges we faced vastly expanded my skills and confidence in guiding my Scouts .

The Guide explains how groups function in the outdoors, how to develop good expedition behavior and how to guide group development towards a shared goal. Koseff has added a great deal of information about working with teens to the second edition that Scout leaders will find particularly valuable.

Koseff also includes an excellent section on risk management and building risk management plans. It explains how to preserve the challenge and adventure of a trip while assuring the safety of the participants. Koseff is the founder of the Outdoor Safety Institute and does extensive work in the field of risk management – his writing on the subject is authoritative and enlightening.

Available from Amazon (\$14, paperback). 5 out of 5 stars with 11 reviews.

Online Resource – The Inquiry Net



Looking for how to throw an ax, "speak" Indian Sign Language, outdoor games, throw a lasso, native "Indian" games, then check out The Inquiry Net (www.inquiry.net). Besides providing information about a lot of "traditional" Scouting skills in it's over 2,000 pages, this Website provides access to hard to find, out-of-print documents. Much of the content has been edited to be of practical use in today's world and is not intended as historical preservation.

Patrol Leadership Training Program



While one can get really excited about traditional Scouting it's sometimes difficult to implement all of the principles in real life. It's especially hard for Scoutmasters, because traditional Scouting isn't just a system that can be mandated from the top down. A Scout Troop must be boy-led. So how in the world are we supposed to teach this stuff to the Scouts and get them excited about it too?

Well, we know it can't be done just by lecturing on the topic. There is no such thing as purely academic Scouting. Traditional Scouting is intensely practical and hands-on. Scouts learn by doing things in the real world. The framework of Scouting is built this way. Experience is the best teacher, and it becomes exponentially better when the experience is wisely guided by a mentor. One of the chief reasons the Scoutmaster exists in the Scouting framework is to guide and inform Scouts while coming alongside them to experience Scouting.

One of the ways a Scoutmaster can do this is through more formally training the Patrol Leaders. For this Enoch Heise (<http://ScoutingRediscovered.com>) has put together a blueprint for a Scoutmaster/Patrol Leader training session that will help you teach the basic building blocks of leadership to your Patrol Leaders. This blueprint isn't a replacement for experience. Rather, it's a small tool for the Scoutmaster to use as he helps to maximize the experience of his Scouts.

The entire course is contained in this article:

<http://scoutingrediscovered.com/scoutcraft/patrol-leadership-training-program-with-pdf-workbooks>. He has also put together a couple of PDF workbooks that can be easily downloaded and printed for personal use.

Recruitment

Advice on Recruiting Cub Scouting Volunteers



It's a common sight at join-Scouting nights: Parents of new Cub Scouts sit around a table waiting for someone to blink. Perhaps it's the dad who acknowledges being an Eagle Scout. Perhaps it's the mom who starts filling out the den roster she finds on the table. Whoever blinks first ends up as den leader, while the rest of the parents breathe a sigh of relief.

The pack committee chairman and Cubmaster may breathe a sigh of relief as well; glad to be done with an unpleasant task that comes around only once a year.

Other leaders take a different approach, recognizing that recruiting leaders is a year-round process and that effective recruiting will ensure their pack's health not just for the current program year but for many years to come.

To see the rest of this article go to:

<http://scoutingmagazine.org/2014/10/advice-recruiting-cub-scouting-volunteers/>

What's the Secret to Recruiting Boy Scouts?



There's plenty of great material (<http://scoutingwire.org/marketing-and-membership-hub/unit-recruiting/>) out there to help Cub Scouters recruit boys into their pack and den.

While focusing on Cub Scouts makes sense, why not introduce families to the adventure of Scouting as early as possible?

But less is said about another important aspect of strengthening the Scouting movement: recruiting Boy Scouts.

1. Remember that Boy Scout recruiting happens all year.

Don't like to think of Boy Scout recruiting as having a "season." You can add new Scouts to your troop all year long. And doing so helps maintain your troop's health and bring in new energy and enthusiasm.

One good goal is to add at least 10 new Scouts every year. That way your troop grows without ever growing stagnant.

2. Appoint a troop membership chairperson.

Every successful recruiting effort needs a strong leader. Find a committee member who can take the lead on growing troop membership.

This person develops and implements a year-round growth plan. He or she should work closely with Cub Scout packs in the community, the district membership committee and the unit commissioner.

3. Use all three methods of growing your troop.

There are three primary ways to get new Scouts into your troop:

1. Graduate Webelos from Cub Scouting into Boy Scouting.
2. Host a troop open house.
3. Encourage peer-to-peer recruiting.

If you use just one or two of these recruiting methods, you're likely missing out on adding new Scouts to your troop. For best results, use all three.

Identify Potential Scout Leaders with the Oreo Test



Wondering whether that parent on the other side of the meeting room would make a good Cub Scout, Boy Scout or Venturing leader?

Try the Oreo Test.

Don Lauer of Troop and Pack 9212 in Summerville, S.C., devised the method, and he said it hasn't failed him yet. "Just a simple thing," he says, "Plus I like cookies."

To see Don's test go to: <http://blog.scoutingmagazine.org/2014/02/26/try-this-identify-potential-scout-leaders-with-the-oreo-test/>

Recruiting Adult Leaders

Excerpted from: <http://bobwhiteblather.com/just-tell-me-what-i-need-to-do/>



Recruiting boys is relatively easy. They'll go for anything that appeals to them, and Cub Scouting has it all – and then some.

But recruiting adults is another story. Most adults are already pressed for time, and those just coming in to Cub Scouting don't know anything about the program or what it takes to run it. There is so much material available that if taken all at once, new volunteers can be extremely confused about what they learned and in what context it applies. New leaders need to know what they need to do today, this week and this month – not be overwhelmed by supplemental training and volumes of additional material that they won't need for weeks, months or years – or ever. The big picture is important – but with the proper guidance up front, it will come in due time.

New volunteers stepping into a leadership position should consider these “baby steps” to get started:

1. Youth Protection Training is an absolute must before a volunteer can even register. Sign up for an online account at <https://myscouting.org> and take the training there.
2. Go online and read the sample den meeting plans. It'll give them a good idea of what they are expected to do, and what kind of resources the BSA will provide them with. Then obtain the full version from the nearest Scout Shop or order from scoutstuff.org
(www.scoutstuff.org/catalogsearch/result/?q=den+leader+guide&as_fid=ic9y%2FCkqa%2FPoFQkUeO%2FB).
3. Take the online position-specific training for their leadership position within the first couple weeks after signing up, and preferably before meeting with the den for the first time. (It's available at myscouting.org as well.) This will help them get off on the right foot.
4. If it's convenient, attend Roundtable – at least once during the first three months. If a new leader can make it a habit, they'll get hooked on the fellowship and resources available.

Other things can wait, and should be checked out eventually, but these few things will get them going in the right direction. As experience and curiosity build, and the desire to “up” the program for the boys, they should gravitate toward additional resources.

As with almost everything, sharing an experience makes it that much better. A new den leader should pair up with either an experienced leader or another parent in his or her son's den (who should be registered as an assistant Den Leader). Then, sit down with your helper to prepare for the next one or two den meetings. Don't try to map out several months' worth at first – just concentrate on next week's meeting. Go over the materials with your assistant and decide how to share the preparation responsibilities, as well as who will run the activities. (Tip: Try to find a time when you can meet on a different day from the den meeting. Trying to meet before or after means you have anxious boys to deal with.)

Being a new den leader can be daunting, as I'm sure you know from personal experience. If you're reading this, chances are good that you were a brand-new den leader yourself at one time. Let's go out and “wow” our boy recruits but not overwhelm our adult recruits.

BeAScout: Putting Scouting on the Map



Is your unit using and up to date on BeAScout! What is it? www.BeAScout.org is the interactive website that allows people looking for Cub Scout, Boy Scout or Venturing program to find units in their area. Units can customize their "pin" which symbolizes the location of their unit. When someone clicks on the pin, a photo or logo chosen by the unit appears along with basic information about the unit and an e-mail to the unit leader can be sent easily

For Parents: Parents need to know that BeAScout is ready to help them find Scouting in their neighborhood. When parents get recruiting fliers this fall, or see yard signs or posters, or do an Internet search, they should be directed to the BeAScout Web page. From that home page, parents can link to more information about specific BSA programs. Then if they want to locate units in their neighborhood, they are directed to input their home address and zip code. And up pops the Google Map with pins representing the units in their area. Contact information will be on the pin, so the parent can call the unit, go to the next meeting, or request more information.

By clicking for more information, parents will be directed to a page where they tell us about themselves (name, address, family members interested in joining, etc.). They can send that request directly to the unit via e-mail.

So how does a unit leader place information about their unit on the Google pin?

Initially, the unit leaders who can access BeAScout to set up the pin are the Cubmaster, Scoutmaster, or Crew advisor along with the unit committee chairperson and the chartered organization representative.

1. They will log into MyScouting and select BeAScout from the Unit Tools section on the left. There are two options:
 - Unit Pin Management: Unit Leaders use this to edit pin information.
 - Unit Lead Management: Unit Leaders use this to manage incoming requests for information from parents interested in Scouting.
2. The unit leader should first complete the Unit Pin Management screen. They will notice two important items on this view.
 - At the bottom right in the box outlined in red is a preview of the Google pin. This is what the parent will see.
 - At the bottom left is the "Fields Displayed on Google Pin" area. The Pin preview box will only display the information that the unit leader selects in this box.

For more information:

www.Scouting.org/training/adult/supplemental/beascout.aspx

Why a New-Parent Orientation is a Must for Your Cub Scout Pack



You know how to welcome the new Cub Scouts who will join your pack this fall. But what about their parents?

The August 2014 edition of CubCast, www.scouting.org/filestore/scoutcast/cubcast/201408_1/CC_Aug_Parent%20Orient.mp3, reveals just that. It tells you why every Cub Scout pack should hold a new-parent orientation the night of their recruitment event.

CubCast's guest was Dr. Geoff Zoeller, professional educator, Cubmaster and the vice president of membership and relations for the Patriots' Path Council in New Jersey. He argues that many experienced Cub Scouters forget what it's like to be a new Cub Scout parent.

"It's something that so many units overlook," he says. "We take for granted as Scouting insiders that everybody knows what the Scouting program really is about. It's really important to have parent orientation so we can explain who we are."

In the podcast Zoeller outlines several topics for you to cover at the new-parent orientation:

- Describing program
- Discussing expectations
- Showing what parents will need to purchase
- Explaining national and local registration processes and fees
- Making connections with individuals
- Answering questions
- Sharing the expected time commitment for parents and Cub Scouts

Zoeller suggests you hold your new-parent orientation the same night of your recruitment event. That way you're sure every new parent will attend and have his or her questions answered and expectations clarified.

Their Own Words: Watch Scouters and Scouts Say Why They Love Scouting



They live in different time zones, and their paths may never cross. But this mom in Miami, dad in Dallas and Scouter in Seattle share one thing in common. All have seen their lives and the lives of their families improved by Scouting. These three Scouters (and many more youth and adults) share their stories in a new batch of One Voice videos from the Boy Scouts of America's magnificent Marketing Team.

The Dallas dad discusses how signing his son up for Cub Scouts helped bring him and his son closer together. The Miami mom finds in Scouting a place where her deaf son feels included. The Seattle Scouter explains how Venturing gives young men and women in his area a chance to try activities they never dreamed they'd do.

And don't miss the video of Matthew, a Cub Scout from Dallas who tells in his own words why he loves Scouting. It's aww-inspiring.

For those of you wishing to share these videos at recruiting events or elsewhere, go to www.scouting.org/onevoice.aspx to download them for offline viewing.

Engage Your Unit Membership Chair with Ideas and Tools



Units that have membership growth and retention have three key components: a strong, vibrant Scouting program; engaged volunteers; and someone on the unit committee who is responsible for membership. The unit membership chair is the unit committee member who will focus on membership growth and retention of the unit. This new position is similar to the district or council membership chair who is responsible for growth in the district or the council.

Membership volunteers are the backbone of our efforts to recruit more youth into the BSA. To impact the lives of youth in each unit, volunteers must be more engaged. Easy to say, but how do they do it?

There are new online resources (www.scouting.org/scoutsource/Membership/Youth_Recruitment/Membership_Chairman.aspx) for the unit membership chair and council membership/relationship chair designed to assist those with this new responsibility in areas that include community projects, membership analyses, marketing, Webelos-to-Scout transition plans, and much more.

All volunteers responsible for membership in their council, district, or unit can find practical methods, new videos, and ideas for developing and implementing successful membership campaigns.

New Video for Scout Recruiting



“Everyone knows the goal of Scouting is to prepare young people to succeed in life,” the young narrator says. “But is it working?”

That tantalizing question begins a new, highly shareable video that could amplify your recruiting efforts in unprecedented ways. Show the 93-second video to a parent considering Scouting, and you’re handing over proof of what you’ve known all along: Scouting changes lives.

The video is a visual representation of a 2.5-year study from Tufts University and Dr. Richard M. Lerner. The researchers surveyed nearly 1,800 Cub Scouts and 400 non-Scouts to see whether Scouting changed the boys’ character.

Short answer: It did indeed. As the video explains, Scouts were more likely than non-Scouts to be cheerful, helpful, kind, obedient, trustworthy and hopeful about their future.

The video “showcases the study’s findings in a brief, animated summary that’s easy to understand and fun to watch.”

Watch the video and share it with everyone you know. You can use the YouTube link (www.youtube.com/watch?v=vxtFCmDZJbQ) or download the video for offline viewing at the Marketing and Membership Hub (<http://scouting.webdamdb.com/viewphoto.php?&albumId=1384439&imageId=38508577&page=1&imagepos=1&sort=&sortorder=>).

'Families Like Mine' Videos Will Inspire You, Recruit Others



Brand awareness, that mountainous obstacle facing new companies and organizations who feel lucky if a quarter of Americans have heard of them, isn't a problem in Scouting.

It seems everyone knows about Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts and sees the value our organization offers to youth.

Our problem is a different one. It's that some families out there don't think Scouting is for them.

Let's show them it is. Start by watching, downloading and sharing one or more of the BSA's new "Families Like Mine" videos:

<http://blog.scoutingmagazine.org/2015/10/13/grab-the-kleenex-families-like-mine-videos-will-inspire-you-recruit-others/>

Recruitment Kits Introduce Teens to the Excitement of Venturing



The National Venturing Youth Cabinet and National Council's Marketing and Membership groups have teamed up to create a host of new recruitment tools designed to introduce teens to the fun and excitement of Venturing!

The new publications include the "Venturing Recruitment Guide" featuring a variety of information and resources, as well as a "Fast Facts" sheet and fliers that can be customized with your crew's meeting place, time, and contact information.

Best of all, these new print resources—are fully customizable and intended to be distributed by those who know the Venturing program best: Venturers.

For more information on the items and how to order, have your crews visit www.Scouting.org/Venturing, and click on the "Venturing Recruiting Toolbox" link.

Three Videos to Entertain, Inspire, and Help You Recruit



Authentic, gritty, visceral. That's how *Bryan on Scouting* describes three new videos released by the Boy Scouts of America:

<http://blog.scoutingmagazine.org/2013/08/30/three-new-videos-to-entertain-inspire-help-you-recruit/>

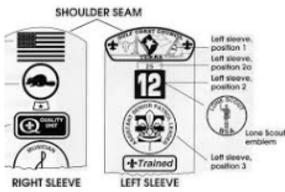
They're yours to view, download for offline viewing, share and use as you see fit. Each gives a compelling picture of what effect Cub Scouting and Boy Scouting can have on local communities like yours.

There's the story of a mom in East Los Angeles who started a Cub Scout pack and saw it bring families together in her community. Or the heroic tale of a Boy Scout in New York who jumped into action during Hurricane Sandy.

Each video lasts less than two minutes. That's a good reminder to units creating videos that attention spans won't hold for very long — and that two minutes is often all you need to deliver a powerful message.

Uniforms

Manual – BSA Insignia Guide



We often get questions about the various Scout uniforms. “Where do I put?” Fortunately, BSA provides an online insignia guide:

www.Scouting.org/ScoutSource/Media/InsigniaGuide.aspx

This online resource has all of the information parents and scouts need to figure out where all of the various emblems are worn.

There is a lot more information in the guide, so pass on this resource to the members of your unit.

Why the Cub Scout Uniform Matters



The importance of the uniform — at all levels of Scouting, but especially in those early Cub Scouting years — cannot be overstated.

It’s a tool for recruiting other young people into the program. It’s a way for boys to show off their accomplishments. It provides a sense of belonging.

Andrews, a professional Scouter for 32 years and now the Scout executive of the Northern Star Council, shares more of his insight in the latest episode of CubCast, the monthly podcast about Cub Scouting.

“That little blue uniform is pretty familiar to most people,” Andrews says. “It might depend upon what community you’re in and what the cultural tradition of Scouting in that community is. But anything that we can do to help the community know that Scouting is an organization that cares about kids and teaches kids to care about each other and to be citizen servants and to grow up as people who are going to take care of the world they live in and play leadership roles — all of those things are important.”

He tells the hosts about the importance of a uniform, how to set a pack uniform policy and how to help families afford uniforms for their Scouts.

That and more in the October 2015 episode of CubCast, available to read or listen to here: www.scouting.org/Scoutcast/Cubcast2015.aspx

Online Resource - Uniform Questions?



BSAUniforms, <http://BSAuniforms.org> an easy-to-use uniform Web site is targeted at new Scout families. It was developed courtesy of the folks in BSA’s Program Impact and the Supply Group.

Click on the appropriate Scouting program — Cub Scouts, Webelos, Boy Scouts, Venturers, Leaders, and Dress Uniforms (professionals). From there, you’re presented with a list of required and awarded patches that you can drag and drop to where they belong on the uniform. It’s simple and fun.

What you’re seeing now is Phase 1, which gives you an idea of what’s possible with this useful tool. The next step is to include everything found in the Guide to Awards and Insignia. It’s a working project that will get better over time.

Now if only they can find a way to sew the patches on for you, as well!

What do the Different Colors of Scouting Shoulder Loops Mean?



Blue, orange, silver, gold and two shades of green. Scouting shoulder loops come in multiple colors to help you identify a fellow Scout or Scouter. But what do all the different colors mean? And which do you wear if you're involved in multiple programs?

Here's a quick guide:

What do the loop colors mean?

The colored Scouting shoulder loops worn on the shoulder epaulets identify the wearer's primary registered position in Scouting.

Cub Scouting

Blue uniform shirts for Tigers, Wolves and Bears don't have epaulets, so boys in those programs don't wear loops.

But Webelos Scouts and all Cub Scout leaders wear blue loops.

Boy Scouting

Red shoulder loops, while still authorized for wear, have been replaced by forest green loops on the Boy Scout uniform.

These loops are worn by Boy Scouts and Boy Scout leaders.

Varsity Scouting

Varsity Scouting, the program for boys age 14 to 18, still uses the tan uniform shirt seen in Boy Scouting.

But instead of forest green loops, Varsity Scouts wear blaze (orange) loops. They also wear the Varsity strip above the Boy Scouts of America strip above the right shirt pocket.

Venturing

Young men and young women in Venturing wear green loops, but not the same shade of green you'll see on Boy Scout uniform shirts.

These green loops match nicely with the green uniform shirt worn by Venturers.

Council and district

Volunteers and professionals who serve/work at the district or council level wear silver loops.

The council Scout executive can also decide whether youth members representing the council, such as summer camp staffers or council representatives at events, may wear silver loops.

The chartered organization representative should wear silver loops, according to the BSA Insignia Guide.

National, regional and area

Volunteers and professionals who serve/work at the national, regional and area level wear gold loops.

Debunking Myths About Wearing Camouflage In Scouting



Scouting supports the men and women of our nation's armed forces, but the BSA isn't a military organization. That's why some adult volunteers object to Boy Scouts of America members wearing camouflage clothing.

If you search the Internet long enough, you'll even find official-looking declarations on the subject of wearing camo in Scouting. The truth is that wearing camo with the button-up shirt of the BSA field uniform is in violation of our rules. But there's nothing that prohibits a Scout from wearing camouflage clothing in a nonuniform setting.

The expert's answer: This comes from Peter Self, team leader in Member Experience Innovation.

We often receive questions about whether wearing camouflage clothing in conjunction with Scouting activities is appropriate. Like most questions there is the simple answer, and then there are the grey areas, which take a bit more discernment and common sense.

According to Article X, Section 4 Clause 4(a) of the Rules and Regulations of the Boy Scouts of America, alterations and/or additions to any of Scouting's official uniforms is not permitted. Since none of our official Scouting uniforms contain any article which incorporates a camouflage pattern, wearing anything like this as a part of the uniform — such as camouflage pants with the official Boy Scout Field Shirt — would be in violation of our rules.

In addition, Article X, Section 4, Clause 4(b) states that, under our Congressional Charter, any Scouting uniform which imitates the uniforms of the U.S. Army, Navy or Marine Corps, is also prohibited.

OK, so wearing camouflage as a part of the official uniform is not in harmony with our rules and regulations, but what about when a Scout isn't in uniform? Let's face it: most of our Scouts don't wear their field uniforms when camping. Would it be OK to wear camouflage then?

There is nothing which prohibits a Scout from wearing camouflage clothing in a nonuniform setting.

However, it might be prudent to ask yourself how doing so might look to the outside observer. Would they look at you as Scouts or as a group trying to imitate the military? Perhaps this would be a discussion to have around your next campfire. Who knows what great insights would be shared and gained?

Tuck everlasting: Scout uniform shirts should always be tucked in, BSA says



To tuck or not to tuck.

That was the question on the minds of hundreds of parents who have called the BSA headquarters over the past several months.

Their query: Does the Boy Scouts of America require uniform shirts to be tucked in? The questions are specifically referring to field uniforms (known to some by the unofficial name “Class A”) and not activity uniforms (“Class B”).

Problem is there hasn't been an official policy in the past. The requirement was that the uniform-wearer must be “neat in appearance.” Most packs, troops, and crews interpreted that to mean tucking the shirts in, but a few didn't.

Now we've got our final answer. Read the BSA's official stance:

Effective Oct. 1, 2013, the official stance on the Boy Scouts of America's uniform policy is that shirts are to be worn tucked in, regardless of whether the wearer is a Cub Scout, Boy Scout, Varsity Scout, Venturer or adult Scouter. All Sea Scout uniforms are designed to be tucked in except youth dress whites and youth dress blues.

In the past, guidelines have simply stated the uniform wearer should be neat in appearance. Neatness includes tucking in the shirt. This update will appear in related resources, such as the uniform inspection sheets, as they are revised and printed.

So there you have it: Tuck those uniform shirts in. Though the official stance is new, the practice is old as the BSA itself. Any time you see a Scout wearing a uniform in an official BSA-printed publication, his shirt is tucked in. Just look through the *Boy Scout Handbook*, *Scouting* or *Boys' Life* magazines, a BSA Supply catalog, or any merit badge pamphlet, and you'll see exclusively tucked-in shirts.

Veteran Unit Bar Award



Over the past 40 years, as scouting units have remained continuously chartered for longer and longer lengths of time, the Boy Scouts of America have introduced veteran unit bars. These cloth bars recognize units for their longevity.

There is a bar for every 5 years of charter, starting with 25 years. All bars are bronze with black numerals except for the 75 year bar introduced in 1985 and the 100 year bar introduced in 2010. The 75 year bar is red with silver numerals and the 100 year bar is red with gold numerals.

The bar is worn by all unit members, not just those that were members on the specific anniversary.

The bar is sewn on the uniform directly above the unit numerals. Units may choose to order custom one-piece unit numerals with the veteran bar included to reduce the number of patches to sew and ensure they are positioned correctly.

Not sure how old your unit is? Just check the first page or your rechartering packet and you'll find out how many months your unit has been around.

Knots and How to Wear Them



You've been awarded a square knot. Congratulations! Now what?

If you've been honored with one of the 34 square knots currently available, waste no time in sewing that badge of honor to your uniform. Though they don't tell the whole story of a Scouter's impact, these tiny rectangles provide great evidence of a volunteer's efforts.



But before you dust off the sewing machine, read these tips:



Location, location, location: Knots should go over the left pocket, as seen from the wearer's perspective. Line them up in rows of three in any order you choose. Typically, the knot you deem most important is worn on the bottom row on your right, but that's your call. If your knot total isn't divisible by three — aka you have a row of one or two knots — you can either center them in the row or keep them aligned to your right. The latter method means you won't have to re-sew those knots if you get a new one.

Count to nine: If you've been a Scouter for some time, those knots could really stack up. How high they go above your pocket is up to you, but the BSA recommends wearing no more than nine — or three rows of three.

Don't flip out: Yes, square knots have a right-side-up. The loop of the embroidered square knot that comes in front of the standing part is always to the wearer's right. This can be tricky on single-color knots, but if you squint really hard you can tell which loop on the knot is above the other. Knots are worn with the distinguishing color (not white) toward the wearer's right.

Veteran Award



The BSA Veteran award recognizes individual members for tenure in Scouting. The recognition item is a lapel pin denoting the number of years of service. This pin is worn only on civilian clothing and not on the Scout uniform.

The veteran award is an adult recognition only. However, tenure earned as a youth may be included in the total number of years registered.

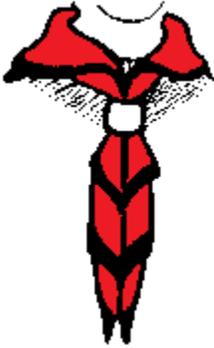


- Scouters desiring recognition as veterans must have maintained an active registered relationship for the required number of years, paying the annual registration fee.
- The records of the national office and local council shall determine eligibility.
- The periods of service claimed for veteran recognition need not be continuous.

Pins (5 year to 90 year) can be purchased at the local scout shop or www.ScoutStuff.org after confirmation is received from national records. The application form can be found at:

www.Scouting.org/filestore/membership/pdf/524-701.pdf

Scout Neckerchiefs Now Approved for Wear with Nonuniform Clothing



One uniform piece unites Scouts in all 223 countries with a Scouting program.

It's not the button-up uniform shirt. It's not the purple World Crest.

It's the Scout neckerchief.

Look at pretty much any photo of a Scout or Scout leader from another country, and you'll see those rolled-up triangles. They're wearing Scout neckerchiefs even if they aren't in their full, official uniform (what we in the U.S. call the field uniform).

And now, the BSA is joining them. Scout neckerchiefs, long a symbol of the movement globally, are now approved for wear by Boy Scouts of America members whether in or out of uniform.

This line on page 12 of the Guide to Awards and Insignia, 2015 edition, confirms the change:

When engaged in Scouting activities, members may wear the neckerchief with appropriate nonuniform clothing to identify them as Scouts.

Previously, according to an earlier version of the Guide, the Scout neckerchief was "worn only with the official uniform and never with T-shirts or civilian clothing."

Why the change?

- Removing restrictions for neckerchief wear brings the BSA in line with other members of the World Organization of the Scout Movement.
- The neckerchief, as recommended by Scouting founder Robert Baden-Powell, can be a tool for first aid. It can work as a sling, tourniquet or bandage.
- Scout neckerchiefs identify Scouts as Scouts, even when they aren't in uniform.
- The neckerchief looks cool

Do you need to travel in uniform to be covered by BSA insurance?



According to Mark Dama, who leads the BSA's Insurance and Risk Management team: "Wearing a uniform is not required to be covered by BSA insurance. The requirement is that the youth and adults be engaged in an official Scouting activity."

Scouting units, volunteer Scouters and chartered organizations are covered by the BSA's Comprehensive General Liability Insurance (www.scouting.org/Home/HealthandSafety/Alerts/Insurance.aspx).

This insurance provides primary coverage for registered volunteers and excess coverage for nonregistered volunteers for claims arising out of an official Scouting activity. That includes allegations of negligent actions by third parties that result in personal injury or property damage claims.

While your automobile insurance is primary, the BSA's Comprehensive General Liability Insurance provides secondary or excess insurance.

Manual – BSA's Service Project Planning and Tool-Use Guidelines



In May 2012, the National Health & Safety Committee issued two documents that were designed to assist youth and adult leaders in planning and safely performing service projects.

The **Service Project Planning Guideline** is useful in the planning process for any service project, whether it is done in a public area or on a council/regional or national BSA facility. This guide used many of the parts of the current Eagle Scout Leadership Service Project book. The steps listed in this guide will help youth and adult leaders to recognize and plan for contingencies as well as the service project needs. Although the Guide is 5 pages long, plenty of “write-in space” is provided. This document can be completed and then shared with the leadership of the service project as a good communication tool. Likewise, it is always a good practice to utilize this form for all pack, troop, crew or team service projects. Councils can also use this form as guidance to leaders for such service projects as “Scouting for Food” or use by Order of the Arrow members in their service projects on or off council properties. The document can be found at: www.Scouting.org/filestore/healthsafety/pdf/680-027.pdf

When it comes to service projects, nobody does it better — or safer — than the Boy Scouts. But before you gather equipment for your next Good Turn, ask yourself some questions:

- Can my 14- and 15-year-old Boy Scouts use lawnmowers and string trimmers to cut the grass at the local church?
- Can my 16- and 17-year-old Venturers use a chain saw and log splitter to cut firewood for elderly residents?

In this case, the answer is no and no.

That's why it's critical to follow the **Age Guidelines for Tool Use and Work at Elevations or Excavations**

(<http://scoutingmagazine.files.wordpress.com/2012/05/age-guidelines-2012.pdf>), that details how old Scouts should be to use certain hand tools and power tools at service projects (including Eagle Scout service projects).

Report your Unit's Service Hours and Achieve JTE Points



Scouting was founded on the premise of doing a Good Turn daily. Community service is very important in the character-building process and, as Scouts, we have made the commitment to give back to our communities. National BSA has provided a website to make it easy for us to report and keep track of Service Projects we perform in our local communities and council.

A Scout is Helpful, But Check First



From Bobwhite Blather, <http://bobwhiteblather.com/a-scout-is-helpful-but-check-first/>

A Scout is helpful. It's the third point of the Scout Law. And to help other people at all times is part of the Scout Oath.

Scouts help others every day. Service is part of our rank requirements, and troops and packs do service projects regularly. Service to an organization outside of Scouting is a requirement for Eagle.

As the holiday season approaches, we find ourselves helping out in many ways – collecting food and clothing for the needy, staffing holiday shops at hospitals and churches, caroling in nursing homes and running errands for senior citizens.

You might think that helping with one of the most visible and iconic service projects in America would be right up our alley. In fact, every holiday season, it seems I see at least one group of otherwise well-meaning Scouts in uniform ringing the bell and tending the red kettle of The Salvation Army as they collect cash donations for the underprivileged.

As beneficial as this activity is, though, it's not permitted for Scouts in uniform to help out by asking for donations to The Salvation Army or any other organization. Our members are prohibited by the Rules and Regulations of the Boy Scouts of America from raising money for other organizations – or even soliciting donations for Scouting or our own units – while identifying ourselves with the BSA. It's stated specifically on the Unit Money-Earning Application:

Youth members shall not be permitted to serve as solicitors of money...in support of other organizations... Boy Scouts/Cub Scouts and leaders should not identify themselves as Boy Scouts/Cub Scouts or as a troop/pack participate in The Salvation Army's Christmas Bell Ringing program. This would be raising money for another organization.

What this means is that we cannot get together as a patrol, troop, pack or den and take a shift ringing the bell in front of the local mall or grocery store, and we certainly cannot do it in uniform.

However, because A Scout is Helpful, it's certainly OK to man the red kettles – just not as a Scout! Go ahead and volunteer with your church, school club, honor society or on your own. But no uniforms – not even a troop or pack t-shirt.

Being helpful to others is always a good thing, but it's especially welcome during the holidays. Plan a project with your unit to brighten someone's day by doing a good turn – but, as A Scout is Obedient, be sure to check first to make sure you're following the rules!

Completion of a certain number of service hours is a requirement for your unit's Journey to Excellence score. This website will help to keep track of service projects and hours spent executing them. Setting up your unit's Profile on the Service Hours website is simple. Just follow the three steps shown below!

To sign up, you will need to know your 4-digit Unit Number (use zeros to make up digits if needed. Example: Troop 98 would use Troop 0098) as well as your Unit ID#, (This is the same # you use for online advancement) If you don't have this, you can get it from your District Executive.

For additional help setting up your unit's profile, visit <https://servicehours.scouting.org/includes/files/popHelp.htm>

For additional information and Service Project examples, visit: www.scouting.org/sitecore/content/Home/Awards/JourneyToExcellence/unit_tips.aspx

Training

Dealing with Lapsed YTP Training



From Ask Andy, <http://netcommissioner.com/askandy/2014/11/issue-421-november-11-2014/>

Dear Andy

When an adult volunteer's Youth Protection training lapses, even though it has been brought to his or her attention weeks prior to the expiration date, are they still allowed to interact with Scouts or do they stay away until Youth Protection is current again?

Here's the deal... If an adult volunteer's YP training tenure has expired, that person is dropped from the unit roster and from membership in the BSA on the re-chartering date. If the re-chartering date hasn't happened yet, and this YP-expired adult interacts with youth, he or she is putting the unit and chartered organization in jeopardy from a liability standpoint. So, your troop committee chair (CC) can sit on his or her hands and wait for re-chartering to roll around, so that the council does the right thing, or the CC can step up to the plate and tell this volunteer that, especially since he or she has been cautioned about lapsing and has refused to take action to correct this, they're history. Take your pick.

Get-Started Guide for New Scouting Leaders



The people at *Scouting* magazine have been where you are, and they understand just how intimidating the job can be. So they created a handy guide to help you through the first months of your Scouting career. Half of the tips in it stem from their own experience; the other half come from Scouters across the country who responded to survey questions on their Facebook page.

<http://ScoutingMagazine.org/2012/08/the-get-started-guide-for-new-scouting-leaders/>

Training Records using MyScouting.org



Have you ever wondered if your BSA adult leader training record is up-to-date? Or why leaders are listed as Untrained on your unit roster even though you know they've taken the appropriate courses? There is now online assistance available to answer those questions via www.MyScouting.org.

"Training Validation" is a menu item located under E-Learning on the left hand side menu. Clicking on Training Validation opens a new Training Search window. Searching via the BSA member identification number usually works best. A link for "Advanced Search" allows for the input of a Scouter's name. A help button on the upper right side of the web page (the question mark) can also provide assistance.

When Can You Wear the BSA's Trained patch?



Adult leaders in units are considered trained and eligible to wear the official Trained emblem when they have completed Youth Protection Training and the training courses outlined below. They're also eligible to wear it if they have completed Youth Protection Training and a previous basic training course when it was current.

Who can wear the Trained strip?

- **Registered adult leaders** who have completed Youth Protection Training and the training courses for their program, which are outlined below.
- **Scouts** who have completed troop training and **Venturers** who have completed Crew Officers Orientation and Personal Safety Awareness training. Scouts and Venturers who have completed NYLT may wear this patch instead of the trained patch if they wish.

What are the program-specific requirements?

These requirements are for adult leaders. The emblem may be worn only in connection with the emblem of office for which training has been completed. In other words, if you're an assistant Scoutmaster and a Venturing crew Advisor, but you've only taken training for the assistant Scoutmaster role, you would only wear the trained patch on your Boy Scout uniform — not on your Venturing uniform.

- **Cub Scouting:** Position-Specific training for your position. (Pack Trainers take Pack Committee Challenge and Fundamentals of Training.)
- **Boy Scouting:**
 - Scoutmasters and assistant Scoutmasters: Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmaster Position-Specific and Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills
 - Troop committee members: Troop Committee Challenge
- **Varsity Scouting:**
 - Coaches and assistants: Varsity Coach Position-Specific and Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills
 - Varsity committee members: Team Committee Challenge
- **Venturing and Sea Scouts:**
 - Advisors and assistants: Venturing Advisor Position-Specific
 - Crew and ship committee members: Crew Committee Challenge
 - All adults in ships: Sea Scout Adult Leader Basic
- **Chartered organization representatives:** This Is Scouting and Training the Chartered Organization Representative.

How do I get trained?

Start at www.scouting.org/training.

ScoutingU: The new look of online training



Posted on Bobwhite Blather: <http://bobwhiteblather.com/scoutingu-the-new-look-of-online-training/>

If you have ever taken an online course, you know how cumbersome they can be. Usually it just involves watching some video clips, or reading text (sometimes with pictures) and possibly taking a quiz. At best, it's a one-way introduction to a topic; at worst, it's a nightmare that never seems to end, as the progress bar slowly moves along.

The Boy Scouts of America has tried to fix some of this with the rollout of the new online training system. Called **ScoutingU**, it incorporates not only training but requirement tracking into the new *my.scouting.org* portal (<https://my.scouting.org/>), which will eventually be the hub to manage all your interactions with the Scouting data system.

You're most likely familiar with the legacy MyScouting Tools website, *myscouting.scouting.org*, if you have taken Youth Protection Training. So how does *my.scouting.org* differ? The new system, a little over a year old, is built using modern web tools so it is not only extensible and flexible for the developers but easy to use for the end user. More importantly, the aim of *my.scouting.org* is to consolidate all online functions under a single portal, including personal and unit membership management, online rechartering and advancement, training, commissioner tools and more. Each registered individual has a profile which grants access to the tools that he or she needs and is authorized to use. And, if you already have a login on the legacy *myscouting.scouting.org*, the same user name and password should work on *my.scouting.org*.

So how does the **ScoutingU** training system differ, and how does it stack up?

Early online training courses basically consisted of the training syllabus and videos converted to a web format. They didn't lend themselves very well to e-learning, and were a poor substitute for in-person training.

The new system is much more like the way corporate training and university online courses are run. Short segments, containing a few minutes worth of information, are spiced up with interactive elements beckoning the user to click for a demonstration, a short video clip, or participatory activity. At the end of each segment, a brief quiz lets the user review the content and assess how well it was absorbed. At any point, the user can exit the program and come back when it's convenient to do so – no longer tied to the computer until the entire session is finished. Upon completion of all elements, the leader is recorded in the database as having completed that particular course.

The Cub Scout leader training has been revised and is available now, and the Boy Scout training will be updated next year when that program undergoes some changes. I noticed, however, that the Cub material is still using the Cub Scout Promise and Law of the Pack, which were retired and replaced with the Scout Oath and Scout Law on June 1st. This oversight will undoubtedly be cleaned up in short order. The rest of the information is presented in a clear manner with both spoken and graphical elements that support and augment one another.

Next time you have a few minutes, take the *my.scouting.org* training pages for a spin. Pick a new course to take, or retake one you've already done. Check to make sure the courses you've completed are credited, especially the ones taken in person. If you notice any discrepancies, your unit commissioner can help correct the records.

Special Needs

How to Work With Scouts with Autism



Working with Scouts with autism will take patience. But the rewards — for the Scout, for you and for the members of your unit — will make it well worth your efforts. After all, Scouting is for all young people. There's a place for everyone, especially Scouts with autism.

Autism, which now affects 1 in 68 children and 1 in 42 boys, manifests itself in a variety of ways. That's why it's called autism spectrum disorder, because it's distinguished by a wide range of symptoms.

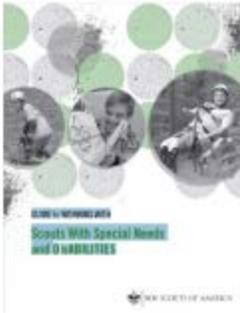
There's no one-size-fits-all approach, but there is advice that's proven to work.

These tips come from the BSA's *Guide to Working With Scouts With Special Needs and Disabilities* (www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/510-071.pdf):

- Provide consistent, predictable structure. Be patient. Allow extra time for activities.
- Provide a visual schedule using words and pictures. All Scouts will find this useful. Don't put times in the schedule because a Scout with autism may expect you to follow it to the minute!
- Let the Scout know about transitions early by saying, "In five minutes we'll be ending this activity and starting another."
- Give the Scout information about new activities ahead of time.
- Break up tasks into smaller steps.

Alert the Scout's parents if there is going to be an activity that may cause sensory difficulties for their son. Consider moving noisy activities outside where the noise can dissipate. If the Scout has issues with food taste and texture, carefully plan the menus around these issues so the Scout can eat the same things as other members of the unit as much as possible.

Manual - Special Needs Scouting Resources



The basic premise of Scouting for youth with special needs is that every boy wants to participate fully and be respected like every other member of the troop. While there are, by necessity, troops exclusively composed of Scouts with disabilities; experience has shown that Scouting usually succeeds best when every boy is part of a patrol in a regular troop.

Every unit leader ought to take the time to read *The Guide to Working With Scouts With Special Needs and Disabilities* (www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/510-071.pdf)

You can reach the National Disabilities Awareness Committee task force for answers to questions about special needs Scouting at disabilities.awareness@scouting.org.

For a PowerPoint presentation about Including Scouts with Disabilities see: www.scouting.org/filestore/boyscouts/ppt/Including_Scouts_with_Disabilities.ppt

The Committee publishes *Abilities Digest* a quarterly newsletter full of information and resources (for the Winter 2015 edition: https://files.ctctcdn.com/137c2ed6201/420b86c5-0375-46e6-b286-cf19c8b1c635.pdf?utm_source=2015+Abilities+Digest+Winter+Issue&utm_campaign=2015+Winter+Abilities+Digest&utm_medium=email). Any Scouting volunteer or professional may subscribe by sending a message to disabilities.awareness@scouting.org – put “SUBSCRIBE” in the subject line and put your name, email address, and council in the message text.

There’s a Scouts with Special Needs Web Page for now, an expanded set of resources will be offered at a new web page that should go live soon.

STEM

Why Every Scout Unit Needs A STEM Coordinator



Serious about STEM? Then you need a Unit STEM Coordinator. This adult position is the point of contact for all Scouts in the pack, troop or crew to help promote and deliver STEM programs in the unit.

STEM stands for science, technology, engineering and math. And it’s important.

The U.S. Department of Commerce says STEM occupations are projected to grow by 17 percent from 2008 to 2018, compared to 9.8 percent growth for non-STEM occupations. Empowering an adult volunteer to serve as Unit STEM Coordinator will help your Scouts develop skills that could one day land them high-paying, exciting jobs in fields that are actually hiring.

So a STEM Coordinator is important, but are you the man or woman for the job? The Unit STEM Coordinator must be registered as a member of the unit committee and must be current in Youth Protection training. The coordinator need not be a STEM expert, although comfort with STEM material would be helpful.

For more information about being a STEM coordinator look at the following article: <http://blog.scoutingmagazine.org/2014/09/23/stem-coordinator/>

Webelos Earning Supernova: So Easy!



Richard Stone, the education and training leader of the National STEM/Nova Committee, interviewed a Nova counselor and Supernova mentor successful in delivering the Nova Awards program to Cub Scouts and Webelos. Dr. David Luthin is active in his pack and troop putting the “outing” in Scouting and adding STEM to the mix.

When not doing Scouting, his day job is a scientist and college professor at Samford University in Birmingham, Ala., where he teaches pathophysiology and pharmacology.

Mentor Dave says the Webelos Supernova is a natural partner to the Webelos program and fits right into the monthly meeting plan. Here is his strategy:

- Plan den meetings to integrate Supernova requirements into the natural flow of the program. The Webelos worked on their activity badges the first year, earning most of the badges required for the Supernova. In the spring of their Webelos I year, the Supernova Award was introduced to the boys, who realized that they had already done a lot of the work. The Webelos then spent a meeting earning the Scholar badge to finish the advancement requirements. Then they need to work on the projects.
- Enlist the school to support the Supernova Award. The teachers supported doing the inventions and projects at school and provided evidence of success for the mentor’s review. Several of the Webelos were in the same class, so they worked together with their teacher. The Webelos also worked on experiments during several den meetings.
- Measure success. Of the Webelos who tried, all successfully earned their Supernova Award. Many of them expressed interest in STEM-related careers. Several of the parents described their STEM-related careers: computer programmer; nurse practitioner; engineer; radiation safety officer; drug discovery scientist; teacher.

Mentor Dave says, “I think that the timing of this program was perfect, not too far into the Webelos program.

“We find that many ‘burn out’ in the second year of the program and are less interested in extra achievements like this one. ... All who started the program, really put in the effort to finish it.”

Becoming one of the few who have earned this award helps motivate Webelos Scouts, too, adds Dave.

Technology Policy Based on the Scout Law



Our youngest Boy Scouts were 3 years old when the first iPhone came out. They don’t remember a world without iThings.

Troops that absolutely forbid smartphones in Scouting — even confiscating them or locking them away — are fighting a losing battle.

That’s why units like Troop 96 of Grayslake, Ill., have developed a technology policy that’s realistic and effective. Scoutmaster Pat Klemens shared his troop’s policy in the following *Bryan on Scouting* blog:

<http://blog.scoutingmagazine.org/2015/05/04/this-troops-excellent-technology-policy-is-based-on-the-scout-law/>

SciStarter



Scouts can join scientific collaborations in nearly any field of study through an amazing number of citizen science opportunities. Citizen science projects can make for engaging patrol or troop activities, and may even tie into merit badges Scouts are working on individually (they should make their counselor aware of these opportunities).

www.SciStarter.com is a great place to begin:

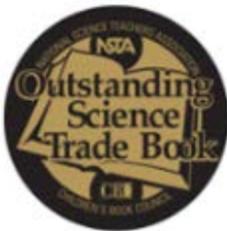
SciStarter will bring together the millions of citizen scientists in the world; the thousands of potential projects offered by researchers, organizations, and companies; and the resources, products, and services that enable citizens to pursue and enjoy these activities.

We aim to:

- Enable and encourage people to learn about, participate in, and contribute to science through both informal recreational activities and formal research efforts.
- Inspire greater appreciation and promote a better understanding of science and technology among the general public.
- Create a shared space where scientists can talk with citizens interested in working on or learning about their research projects.
- Satisfy the popular urge to tinker, build, and explore by making it simple and fun for people—singles, parents, grandparents, kids—to jump in and get their hands dirty with science.

The dozens of different participatory activities for hikes listed on SciStarter.com are just a few examples of a staggering number of opportunities for Scouts.

Outstanding Science Trade Books for Students K–12



Reading science trade books is the perfect way for students to build literacy skills while learning science content. The National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) has for the past several years created listings of outstanding children's science trade books (www.nsta.org/publications/ostb). These books were chosen by a book review panel appointed by the NSTA and assembled in cooperation with the Children's Book Council (CBC). NSTA and CBC have joined forces on this bibliographic project since 1973, when the list was known as Outstanding Science Trade Books for Children and was primarily targeted at grades K through 8. Beginning in 2002, the list was expanded to include high school as well.

For the lists from 2010 and after, they also included links to activities that complement each selection.

NOVA Awards Program



The Boy Scouts of America's NOVA Awards program incorporates learning with cool activities and exposure to science, technology, engineering and mathematics for Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, and Venturers. The hope is that the requirements and activities for earning these awards stimulates interest in STEM-related fields and shows how science, technology, engineering and mathematics apply to everyday living and the world around them. Counselors and mentors help bring this engaging, contemporary, and fun program to life for youth members.

There are four Nova awards for Cub Scouts, Webelos Scouts, Boy Scouts, and Venturers. Each award covers one component of STEM—science, technology, engineering, or mathematics. For their first Nova award, Scouts earn the distinctive Nova award patch. After that, a Scout can earn three more Nova awards, each one recognized with a separate pi (π) pin-on device that attaches to the patch. The patch and the three devices represent each of the four STEM topics—science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

The Supernova awards have more rigorous requirements than the Nova awards. The requirements and activities were designed to motivate youth and recognize more in-depth, advanced achievement in STEM-related activities.

All requirements may be found in the Nova awards guidebooks, available through local Scout shops—one for Cub Scouts, one for Boy Scouts, and one for Venturers. The requirements can be completed with a parent or an adult leader as the counselor (for the Nova awards) or mentor (for the Supernova awards). Each guidebook includes a section for the counselor and mentor.

To look at the requirements:

- Cub Scout:
www.BoyScoutTrail.com/content/award/cub_scout_nova-2296.asp
- Boy Scout:
www.BoyScoutTrail.com/content/award/boy_scout_nova-2295.asp

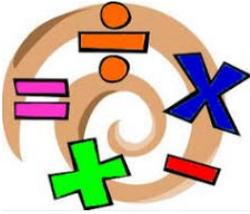
Online Resource – Science NetLinks



Science NetLinks, <http://ScienceNetLinks.com>, is a K-12 science education resource for teachers, students, and families that is produced by the American Association for the Advancement of Science. All of the resources are Internet based and free to everyone. Lessons and activities can be printed or used online. Many of the interactives, esheets, and tools work great on an interactive white board or in a computer lab. All of the resources are designed to be delivered in a variety of formats and classroom settings.

At the heart of Science NetLinks are standards-based lesson plans that incorporate reviewed Internet resources, and can be selected according to specific learning goals and grade ranges. Each lesson is tied to at least one learning goal and uses research-based instructional strategies that support student learning. The lessons are written for the teacher, but include student-ready materials such as student sheets (student reproducibles) or esheets (online worksheets that enable students to engage directly in Internet activities).

Online Resource – CoolMath



The following is a good STEM-Math resource for Scouts (and adults) to use. Coolmath.com LLC has a set of three sites to make math enjoyable for people who thought it couldn't be fun.

www.Coolmath.com – offers math for ages 13-100, with explanations that are easy to grasp on topics like algebra, pre-calculus and more.

www.Coolmath4Kids.com – for ages 12 and under. This is an amusement park of math, games, and more, designed to teach math and make it FUN.

www.Coolmath-Games.com – this is the brain-training site, for everyone, where logic and thinking meets fun and games. These games have no violence, no empty action, just a lot of challenges that will make you forget you are having a mental workout.

Online Resource – RAFT (Resource Area For Teaching)



RAFT (Resource Area For Teaching, www.raft.net), is a non-profit organization, founded in 1994, whose's main focus is to inspire, engage and educate children through the power of hands-on teaching.

RAFT's mission is to help educators transform a child's learning experience through hands-on education to one that inspires the joy and discovery of learning. RAFT's products (Activity Kits & Idea Sheets), services (professional development and mentoring) and low-cost teaching supplies enrich and improve the education of over 900,000 young people each year.

Field tested with a high success rate in engaging students, and increasing retention and academic achievement, RAFT hands-on Activity Kits are now available online at www.raftstore.net

To provide kits and materials at low cost, the organization has developed an innovative supply chain process that converts commonly found or discarded materials from the business community into hands-on Activity Kits, all built with the help of thousands of volunteers.

RAFT has Scout-tested, engaging, and fun hands-on learning activities that map to STEM related badge requirements and activities: www.raft.net/scouts

Social Media / Unit Websites

Social Media Guidelines



It's an exciting time to be part of the BSA for many reasons. One of those is that new communication vehicles now enable current and past Scouts and Scouters, as well those who are interested in participating or are just interested in Scouting in general, to communicate directly with each other about Scouting. Online social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube have made it possible for virtually anyone with an Internet connection to create and be part of online communities where people can discuss Scouting and share stories, photos, videos, and other types of media.

Although using social media is not a Scouting activity, their use to connect with others interested in Scouting can be a very positive experience. But the creation and maintenance of these channels requires forethought, care, and responsibility. For that reason, the Boy Scouts of America has developed guidelines to help you navigate the use of social media channels. These guidelines are a complement to the BSA's existing Youth Protection policies and training:

<http://scouting.org/scoutsource/Marketing/Resources/SocialMedia.aspx>

Is Your Pack, Troop, or Crew Website Brand-Compliant?



The color scheme on your troop's website is red and blue, but is it the right red and blue? Is that the right shade of yellow on your pack page? And what about that Venturing logo you converted to 3D "for effect"?

In other words, are you brand-compliant?

Don't worry, there's no "BSA Brand Police" planning to perp walk you in handcuffs if your unit's website or printed materials don't match the official specs.

If this all sounds a little like minutiae, it is. But these details are an important part of maintaining the BSA's iconic brand. And you're a key player.

So why not do all you can to create a consistent look and feel in all the ways a Scout and his family interacts with the organization?

The Boy Scouts of America Brand Identity Guide (www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/310-0231.pdf) breaks down the basics for you. You can learn the proper and improper ways to use BSA logos, the exact specs on official Scouting colors, and even tips on websites, social media, and photography.

Here's the page for official Scouting logos, ready to use:

www.scouting.org/scoutsource/Marketing/Brand/logos.aspx

What are Scouts Seeing on your Facebook Page?



From Bryan on Scouting, <http://blog.scoutingmagazine.org/2014/04/16/what-to-do-when-your-scouting-and-personal-worlds-collide-online/>

Your boss views your tailgating photos on Instagram, your Facebook friends see you complaining about your job or your Scouts read your tweets in favor of a politician.

You've just encountered context collapse. That's the phrase for something intended for a specific audience that becomes seen by a much wider, unintended audience.

It happens in the real world, like if you run into a coworker, Scout or Scouter at church or a political rally. But it happens even more frequently online, where we can instantly share sometimes-controversial views with a few simple taps on the keyboard.

Eagle Scout Mark Ray, skilled author and regular contributor to both *Scouting* and *Eagles' Call* magazines, writes on his blog about this phenomenon:

Thanks to context collapse, your boss can see your vacation photos, your friends can see what you're saying about work, and — most importantly for our purposes — your Scouts can see what you're liking on Facebook, whether that's Lolcats, a political cause or your favorite microbrewery.

We know that more than two-thirds (71 percent, to be exact) of online adults use Facebook, meaning chances are good you're dealing with context collapse even if you don't know it. So it's a good idea to take a second to think about your online existence and who in your life sees what. That's especially relevant when Scouts are involved.

Mark shares three strategies for dealing with context collapse and making sure you don't reveal more about yourself than you're comfortable sharing. Ranging from the most extreme to the simplest, they are:

1: Keep Scouting contacts out of your social networks altogether.

This is the most radical approach and would mean not communicating with Scouts and Scouters at all online.

Though I wouldn't recommend this isolationist approach, social networking certainly is not mandatory in Scouting, and this would prevent context collapse.

2: Create separate social media accounts for Scouting.

I've seen several Scouters use this strategy. They have one Facebook or Twitter account for their Scouting life and another for their personal life.

Only friending non-Scouts/Scouters on Facebook and making your Twitter profile private would facilitate this approach.

3: Adopt a lowest-common-denominator approach where everything you post online is safe for all audiences.

This is the strategy Mark uses. "You'll never see me post anything online that wouldn't be appropriate for the youngest Scout to read, and if you want to know about my political leanings or adult-beverage preferences, you'll have to ask," he writes.

Can We Talk?



Well, maybe not 'talk', but at least write or type! There are over 700 Scouting groups looking for Pen Pals on the Scouting Pen Pal area of Boy Scout Trail (<http://boyscoutstrail.com/penpals/>). That means that there are over 700 international Scouts, Girl Scouts, Cub Scouts, and Boy Scouts units looking for new friends to exchange greetings.

Many Scout ranks and merit badge requirements ask the Scout to interact with other people in their community or around the world. Here's a great way to connect with other Scouting groups out there. Even if you aren't really looking for a Pen Pal, other activities can be more fun when done with scouts far away. For example, the new *Code of the Wolf* requirement #4 to send a coded message would be way cool if sent to a fellow Scout in another state or country! Or, the *Building a Better World* Arrow of Light requirement #10c to find a brother scout unit in another country can be done here.

How it Works: The process is fairly simple and ongoing communications are completely up to you.

- Register your Unit - Dens, Patrols, or other groups with a responsible adult register, not individual scouts.
- Request Pen Pals. Find other groups that have registered and send them an invitation which they accept or decline.
- Send Messages. Scouts can send these messages with the guidance of the responsible adult.
- Receive Messages. All correspondence to each Pen Pal is stored and can be viewed at any time.

Security: Messages can be sent through this Pen Pal system so that your email addresses and postal addresses are never shared. Only people that have registered can access the system, and access can be revoked at any time. If you prefer, you can share your addresses with your Pen Pals. You can also exchange contact information with your Pen Pals and communicate outside of this Pen Pal system via phone, postal mail, or email. This allows you to have individual Scouts interact with other individuals, but all security and protection is up to you.

A Note about "Permissions" for Photos and News Regarding Scouting Activities



When a parent/guardian signs the Health and Medical form (Part A), it provides the release for photos in BSA publications:

I also hereby assign and grant to the local council and the Boy Scouts of America, as well as their authorized representatives, the right and permission to use and publish the photographs/film/videotapes/electronic representations and/or sound recordings made of me or my child at all Scouting activities, and I hereby release the Boy Scouts of America, the local council, the activity coordinators, and all employees, volunteers, related parties, or other organizations associated with the activity from any and all liability from such use and publication. I further authorize the reproduction, sale, copyright, exhibit, broadcast, electronic storage, and/or distribution of said photographs/film/videotapes/ electronic representations and/or sound recordings without limitation at the discretion of the BSA, and I specifically waive any right to any compensation I may have for any of the foregoing.

Other

Sports or Scouting — or Both?



Tufts University doctoral candidate Dan Warren studied 4,000 kids in the Philadelphia area, including some who are in Scouting and some who aren't. In part of his study Warren used his research to address the age-old question of whether a kid gets more out of Scouting or sports, and the answer may surprise you.

He found that a young person's best bet might be participating in both.

Few kids are in only one after-school program anyway, but if they're in just one, it's typically sports. Some 80 percent of American youth have some sort of sports involvement, Warren says.

The jury is still out on the benefits of sports participation. Some studies show pros like better grades, improved self-esteem, enhanced leadership skills. Others show cons like increased aggression, reduced ability to see right and wrong, and more chance for risk behaviors.

But if a kid is only doing sports, he might not be living up to his potential.

"What we found was that if kids are participating in sports and nothing else, things didn't seem to go well," Warren says. "If they were participating in some type of youth-development program like a Boy Scout, when you add sports onto that, there is this amazing result. It catapulted."

Sports and Scouting combine to create a character-building environment. The benefits of convergence seem to go against the concept of Scouting and sports being competitors. Instead, Warren says, they should be teammates.

"I think if the leaders of these organizations are going to not see this as a competition, start reaching a hand over there and saying, 'How can we work together to make sure our games and our camporees can work at the same time because we're benefitting each other?' That's really important," he says.

Removing a Certain Four-letter Word from Scouting



Michael Montemarano, a Scoutmaster in Staten Island, N.Y., is on a mission. His goal: eliminate a particularly irksome word from the Scouting vernacular. He has heard this four-letter word used quite a bit in his time as a volunteer. What's the word? "Kids."

Montemarano was struck by how often adult leaders use that word to refer to Scouts — even older Scouts. Some of these young men are nearing their 18th birthdays and will soon enter college or the workforce or the military. And yet many of us still call them kids.

That's why Montemarano put his foot down. Out of respect for these young men, he'll call them "Scouts" regardless of age.

If Scouts are thought of as kids, then that's the mindset that they will be treated with and the expectation that they will be expected to live up to. As you know, we're trying to develop leaders and leadership demands a level of maturity beyond what a normal "kid" could demonstrate. Referring to them as Scouts, gentlemen, young men, or other more mature terms helps transfer a level of respect and maturity that the Scouts should rise to.

Tufts Study Confirms: Scouting Builds Character in Six Critical Areas



From *Bryan on Scouting*, Oct 22, 2015, <http://blog.scoutingmagazine.org/2015/10/22/tufts-study-confirms-scouting-builds-character-six-critical-areas/>

You and I know Scouting builds character in young people. Now we have the scientific evidence to prove it.

In a groundbreaking two-and-a-half year study, Dr. Richard M. Lerner and his team at Tufts University surveyed nearly 1,800 Cub Scouts and 400 non-Scouts in the Philadelphia area to analyze the effects of Scouting.

What did they find?

As first reported on Scouting Wire (<http://scoutingwire.org/how-scouting-promotes-positive-character-development/>), the study proved boys in Cub Scouts became significantly more cheerful, helpful, kind, obedient, trustworthy and hopeful about their future than non-Scouts. (Recognize any of those attributes from the Scout Law?)

How they did it

The Scouts and non-Scouts were surveyed at five separate times during the two and a half years.

In the first survey, conducted right after the start of the study, researchers found no significant difference between Scouts and non-Scouts. If the Scouts had entered the program with unusually high character attributes, one could argue that Scouting merely attracts better young people instead of helping make them.

Instead, researchers were confident their study began with both groups on equal footing.

In the next few surveys, things got interesting.

- Gains were made in those six critical areas I mentioned above: cheerfulness, kindness, hopeful future expectations, trustworthiness, helpfulness, obedience
- Scouts were more likely than non-Scouts to embrace positive social values. Ask a Scout what's most important to him, and he was more likely to respond with answers like "helping others" or "doing the right thing." Ask a non-Scout the same thing, and he was likely to say "being smart," "being the best" or "playing sports."
- There were even variations within Scouting. For example, Scouts who attended meetings regularly reported higher character attributes than those who attended infrequently. In a nod to the importance of tenure, Scouts who stayed in the program longer reported higher character attributes.

These findings are spectacular. We should shout them from mountaintops and approach strangers on the streets to say: "Did you hear? Now we have proof that Scouting builds character!"

Did You Know There Are Two Editions of *Boys' Life* Each Month?



Here's a little behind-the-scenes *Boys' Life* info you may not know: The magazine is available in two different versions. Your Scout automatically gets the one that's right for him, and it's easy to tell which is which.

First, though: What are the versions?

The **Cub Scout edition** has content tailored to younger readers, including fun, age-appropriate puzzles, mazes, comics and games.

The **Boy Scout edition** has high-adventure stories, merit badge tips and content better suited for older boys.

There's overlapping content, too, including select feature stories and popular sections like Scouts in Action, Think & Grin and Pedro's Hitchin' Rack.

Here's some more stuff you might not know about the two editions:

Boys' Life knows which one your boy needs. Scouts automatically get the edition that's right for them — no action is necessary on your part. *Boys' Life* knows the Scout's age from his registration form, and that info is used to make sure he gets the right version.

There's an easy way to tell which one you're looking at, you'll probably spot quite a few differences, but pay particular attention to the top-right corner of the contents page. You'll see an illustration of a Cub Scout holding up the Cub Scout sign (as seen on the right).



That little guy is in every issue of *Boys' Life's* Cub Scout edition. Flip to the contents page, look for the Cub Scout and you'll know which version you're holding.

Why two versions?

This allows the magazine to tailor program-related content to the appropriate audience. Cub Scout content for Cub Scouts; Boy Scout content for Boy Scouts.

But *Boys' Life* includes way more than just Scouting stories. The magazine covers everything boys are interested in, all while upholding Scouting's values. Take movies for example. Say there's a movie Scouts are sure to love, but it's rated PG-13. *Boys' Life* would cover that movie in its Boy Scout version but not its Cub Scout version. That same strategy applies to books, games and toys.

10 Memorable Ways to Pump Up Your Scoutmaster's or Cubmaster's Minute



After a pack or troop meeting filled with learning, fun, and fellowship comes the grand finale: the Scoutmaster's or Cubmaster's Minute. You've got 60 seconds; make them count.

Consider it a closing argument to your Scouts — one last chance to inspire before they head home.

But how do you find a message that's relevant, powerful, and memorable that can be crammed into 60 seconds? Try looking at this article from Bryan Wendell, senior editor of *Scouting* and *Eagle's Call* magazines:

<http://blog.scoutingmagazine.org/2012/04/17/10-memorable-ways-to-pump-up-your-scoutmasters-or-cubmasters-minute/>

Book – The Art of Nurturing Boys



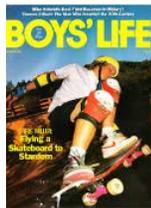
review from <http://blog.myscoutstuff.org/2012/11/the-art-of-nurturing-boys/>, November 29, 2012

I just finished a fantastic book about the psychology of boys and what's necessary for their healthy growth and development... not so much physically, but mentally and emotionally. It's called *Wild Things: The Art of Nurturing Boys* by Stephen James and David Thomas. Whether you're raising sons at home or leading boys in Scouts, this is a must read for everyone who has the responsibility of nurturing boys at any age.

I first heard of this book from a comment posted on Brad Harris' blog about Scouting's Secrets to Success. The statement that caught my attention was "how many 'needs' described by the book for the different stages [in a boy's development] were fulfilled by Scouting." This intrigued me enough to go buy the book and let me tell you, what a ton of great information I found in this resource. It really took me to another level of understanding the importance of having a great Scouting program.

Available from Amazon, \$11 paperback.

Digital Boys' Life



Boy's Lie, the magazine about everything in a boy's life, has launched its digital version. Search "Boys' Life magazine" in the Apple App Store, Google Play, or Amazon Appstore to read *BL* on your tablet or smartphone. It's free for subscribers and is just \$12 for 12 issues with *BL*'s special print-and-digital bundle. Go to www.BoysLife.org/subscribe-now/bundle.

General Online Resources

Online Resource – Scouter Network



The www.SCOUTER.com network was launched in September, 1995, as a grass root resource to equip Scout leaders with the tools to fulfill their responsibilities... as leaders, as parents and as mentors.

We are the largest Scouting web portal in the world, with more than 1.5 million pages visited each month. Through our huge web of Compass Points, covering more than 400 Scouting-related topics, we link to Scouting and Scouting-related web sites throughout the United States and the World.

Online Resource – ScouterMom

Scouter Mom

A great source for Scouting articles is www.ScouterMom.com. Written by a Scouter who has been through it all it offers a lot of information and useful tips from Cub Scouts to Venturing. Resources are listed for every rank with lots of ideas on what to do for den meetings, camping ideas and gadgets, and committee helps.

Online Resource – InsaneScouter



www.InsaneScouter.org is a website for Scouts and Guides from around the world. They provide a vast library of Scouting resources and services including: email newsletter, e-postcards, and virtual flat Stanley. Everything provided is to "help leaders one resource at a time" in putting on better programs for their Scouts.

Online Resource – Scouting Magazine



You rely on *Scouting* magazine for relevant information to help you better serve Scouts. Now, you can find this same advice and much more on the Web, at the redesigned and easy-to-navigate <http://ScoutingMagazine.org>.

Whether it's up-to-date policy information, guides to advancement, outdoor advice, and more, you'll find that scoutingmagazine.org goes beyond the magazine pages to offer readers additional in-depth tips and tools

Online Resource – HalfEagle



www.HalfEagle.com brings together the historians of today's Scouting movement. It has over 7,100 entries from volunteer's blogs and scouting related photo groups updated every hour.

This site is a service project of Gregg Hilferding, an Eagle Scout, U.S. Army veteran, and Appalachian Trail thru-hiker. Greg is currently serving as the Scoutmaster for Troop 72 in Zephyrhills, Florida. This website is independently operated and is not sponsored by, endorsed by, or affiliated with BSA

Note: About half of the articles listed in the Goose Creek newsletter were found through the HalfEagle site.

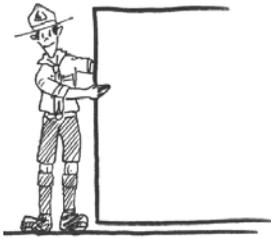
Online Resource – Ask Andy



You'll find the **Ask Andy** column at <http://NetCommissioner.com/AskAndy/> Andy has been answering questions about Scouting for ten years on line and a lot more years prior to that. He patiently answers some of the same questions over and over again;" how many square knots can I sew on my shirt and in what order?" kind of questions. Andy is also direct and sometimes a little curmudgeonly and is not afraid to tell people how wrong they are (some of them are really very wrong indeed).

Andy is focused on the success of individual Scouts. He assiduously follows policy because the rules and regulations are also focused on the success of Scouts.

Online Resource – Scouting Newsroom



Admit it: You like to be the first to know what's new in the Boy Scouts of America.

So go to the **Scouting Newsroom** (<http://scoutingnewsroom.org>), the new, official site for BSA news, updates and information. The public-facing site has news releases, fact sheets, and an overview of topics important to Scouts, Scouters, the public, and the news media.

There's even an "Email Updates" box where you can enter your email address and receive a message every time a new entry is posted.

Scouting Newsroom, like the official news sites of other major organizations, is your best bet for reading news directly from the source. It's the BSA's exact message, unfiltered.

Online Resource – Scoutorama



Scoutorama (www.Scoutorama.com) is a Scouting resource warehouse. The content and information on the site is made possible by the thousands of Scouts and Scouters from all over the world who take time to contribute songs, thoughts, skits, and other information to the site. It has resources for Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts including fund raisers, activities, camping recipes, merit badges, Pinewood Derby, skits, songs, Eagle projects, ceremonies, and more.

Scoutorama supports traditional Scouting values. They are registered with the Internet Content Rating Association (ICRA) and invest a great deal of resources into ensuring that the material available on this site is in harmony with traditional Scouting values.

Online Resource – ScoutWiki



ScoutWiki (<http://en.scoutwiki.org>) is a free encyclopedia which consists of worldwide Scouting and Guiding related articles. Anyone can participate by creating a new page or by editing an existing article. The English version of ScoutWiki currently has 2,637 articles in English. However, most of these articles could use some improvement, as compared to (e.g.) the Finnish, the French and the Dutch ScoutWiki's. Some of the categories in the sites are: History, Publications, Ideas for activities, Scouting skill, Methods and manners (uniforms, flags, badges, ...), Camping, Events, Equipment, Scouting in the world, and Tips and tricks for scout leaders.

Online Resource – Scout-Wire



It's been said that the Boy Scouts of America is the largest user of dead trees anywhere in the world. The number of printed publications has been legendary – handbooks, pamphlets, forms, guidebooks, magazines – seemingly one for every purpose and sometimes several.

The BSA seems to have adopted the same philosophy with websites. There are at least a dozen different national websites, each dedicated to a specific purpose, but none were designed to deliver news and information to everyone with a stake in the program. Professionals have had www.Scout-Wire.org for some time, and while it carries news of use to volunteers, it's primarily aimed at those who are paid employees of the BSA or one of its local councils. There's www.Scouting.org, of course, which provides general information, membership, policy and procedures, and its subsites www.myscouting.org and www.my.scouting.org, which provide training, profile, unit and commissioner tools and other self-service resources. The three magazines and four high-adventure bases each have their own websites. And most of us are familiar with www.scoutstuff.org, the online presence of the Supply Division.

To provide a central site for current information, the BSA has announced the opening of yet another website providing news for everyone involved in Scouting. www.ScoutingWire.org has gone live, has a slick appearance and easy navigation, and sorts articles into categories for the various programs as well as for local council staff.

Stories appear in one or more of the topics of Activities, Finance, Fundraising, High Adventure, Leadership, Marketing, Training and Recruiting. There are links to yet more websites: www.ScoutingNewsroom.org which publishes official press releases and the sites of the three magazines Boys' Life, Scouting and Eagles' Call.

Boy Scout Store



Boy Scout Store (www.BoyScoutStore.com) is an independent website and provides scouting collectibles since 1996. They are not affiliated with the Boy Scouts of America®, the Girl Scouts of the USA or the World Organization of Scout Movements.

Their site has Merit Badges, Merit Badge Books, Council Shoulder Patches, Order of the Arrow Flaps, Spooof Patches, Books and Handbooks, Eagle Scout, Cub Scout items, National Jamboree, World Jamboree, Scouting Coins and much more.

Online Resource – The LDS-BSA Relationships Committee



The LDS-BSA Relationships Committee maintains a site, www.LDSBSA.org, for parents and new leaders which explains how packs, troops, teams, and crews are set up in a ward and it has a number of useful resources and links for those parents/leaders to use to explain the LDS works with the Boy Scout program.

They offer a quarterly newsletter and new leaders can even receive weekly email updates that can prompt them on what they need to be successful.

Advancement

General

Manual – Guide to Advancement



The Guide is the **official** source for administering advancement in all Boy Scouts of America programs: Cub Scouting, Boy Scouting, Varsity Scouting, Venturing, and Sea Scouts.

The newest edition of the Boy Scouts of America *Guide to Advancement* (www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/33088.pdf) contains answers to pretty much any advancement question that might come up, and it's essential reading for your unit's advancement chair and others who like to be kept in the loop on all things advancement.

Advancement News e-newsletter



ARE YOU READING ADVANCEMENT NEWS YET? To get yourself started, here's where to check it out:

www.scouting.org/scoutsource/GuideToAdvancement/Advancement_News.aspx

ADVANCEMENT NEWS is the official e-newsletter of the BSA's National Advancement Committee and National Advancement Team – It's written by volunteers for volunteers!

If you're a council or district advancement chair or committee member, or associated with the path to Eagle, this is a "must read" for you! But, no matter what your volunteer (or professional!) position in Scouting, you'll want to stay current and you'll enjoy browsing back issues in the Advancement News Archives.

To subscribe, just shoot an email to advancement.team@scouting.org with "subscribe" in the subject line; and include your name, email address, and council name in the body of the message.

One-Stop Shopping for News on What's Changing in the BSA and When



New Cub Scout handbooks are just part of the story.

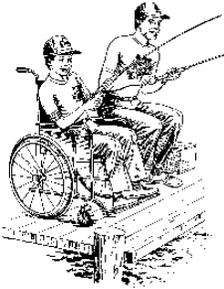
Keeping up with one BSA program change after another (after another) can feel a little like drinking from a fire hose.

It doesn't have to.

Just consider www.scouting.org/programupdates your one-stop shop for promotional fliers, training information and the latest news about changes coming in 2014, 2015 and 2016 in Venturing, Cub Scouting and Boy Scouting.

The fliers are especially useful for leaders who want something tangible to distribute to educate parents about changes to BSA programs.

BSA Alternative Requirements



Special needs or disabilities shouldn't stop a young person from joining Scouting and thriving in our life-changing program. Fortunately, they don't.

BSA alternative requirements benefit Scouts or Venturers with a wide range of documented disabilities, including those that are physical and/or cognitive. These modified requirements allow a registered member to remain in Cub Scouts beyond age 11, in Boy Scouts beyond age 17 and in Venturing or Sea Scouts beyond age 20.

Young men with certain documented disabilities may earn Boy Scout ranks, including Eagle Scout, even after they turn 18. They use requirements that challenge them in a specially tailored way. The requirements must be approved by the council advancement committee and should be as challenging for the Scout with special needs as the ones they replace.

In the *Guide to Advancement*, Section 10.0.0.0, topics 10.1.0.1 and 10.1.0.2, lists the possible criteria and procedures to register a Scout beyond the age of eligibility. Topics 10.2.2.0 through 10.2.2.2 explain the policy and process for applying for alternative requirements for Tenderfoot through First Class. Topic 10.2.2.3 is the policy and procedures for Scouts working on Star, Life, and Eagle to apply for alternative merit badges to the Eagle required ones.

In addition to the *Guide to Advancement* is the following resource – a PowerPoint presentation with embedded presenter's notes good for giving a presentation to other parents and leaders:

www.scouting.org/filestore/boyscouts/ppt/Including_Scouts_with_Disabilities.ppt

With it is a separate file of the presenter notes that is good for reviewing the material on your own:

www.scouting.org/filestore/boyscouts/pdf/Including_Scouts_with_Disabilities_Speaker_Notes.pdf

These are among the topics covered in the PowerPoint:

- How to document a disability and qualify for alternative requirements
- How to register beyond the age of eligibility
- Cub Scout and Boy Scout rank advancement
- Alternative merit badge requirements
- Creating an Individual Scout Achievement Plan, which is a roadmap for parents and leaders

Several scenarios to help you understand the process

What Grade is the Scout in?



All Cub Scout ranks and some Boy Scout requirements (notably Cyber Chip) are related to what grade the Scout is in. So this summer how do you tell which grade they are in, and when did the changeover occur.

The Boy Scouts recognize June 1st as the advancement point to the next grade, even if school is still in session. So on that date a 3rd grader (Bear) with several days still left to go for school to end would, for rank advancement purposes, be considered a 4th grader (Webelos).

Hear it First on Twitter



Follow the national Advancement Team on Twitter. Topics cover the FAQs received at the national office, clarifications on policies and procedures, news on changes and new releases, and best practices in advancement.

If you already have a Twitter account, follow us at @AdvBSA or BSA Advancement Team. If you don't have an account, it's time to take the plunge. It's a quick and easy process to set up an account at www.Twitter.com. To limit incoming emails (tweets), you can select the Advancement Team as the only account you want to follow.

They can also link to the GUIDE TO ADVANCEMENT, the EAGLE SCOUT SERVICE PROJECT WORKBOOK, "Advancement News" Archives, and the Eagle Scout Rank Application at:

www.scouting.org/scoutsource/BoyScouts/AdvancementandAwards/resources.aspx

Boy Scout Online Tests



One of the challenges of a leader with a large group of scouts is checking their advancement requirements. This can take quite a bit of time and effort. Sometimes, scouts will attempt to advance before they have adequately learned the skills or gained required knowledge.

The Boy Scout Trail website has a number of online tests (<http://boyscouttrail.com/tests.asp>) intended to help scouts check their understanding of information before attempting their advancement.

A scout should take a test after he has studied the information and thinks he has the knowledge to pass the test. Taking a test to learn the information is not an effective use of the online test.

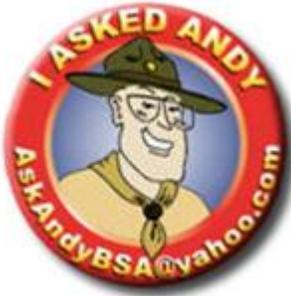
Some tests give the scout an opportunity to email his results to his adult leader. You can review how well the scout did and find out where he may need to devote more time.

Available tests are:

- Webelos Rank Test (pre-2015 requirements)
- Arrow of Light Test (pre-2015 requirements)
- Boy Scout Oath and Law Test
- Boy Scout First Aid Test (6 different tests)
- Boy Scout US Flag Test
- Boy Scout Knots Test (2 different tests)
- Boy Scout Map Symbols Test
- Boy Scout Trivia Test
- Scouting Crossword
- Knots Crossword

Cub Scout

When Do Cub Scouts Advance – From Dear Andy (No. 303 – April 17, 2012)



Dear Andy,

When do Cub Scout advance their ranks? Is it at the end of the current school year/grade, or in September, when school starts up again?

All Cub Scout ranks advance at the end of the current school grade; not in September when school starts up again.

Goose Creek District Editor Note: For practical purposes our school year ends May 31st. That means that all activities from June 1 onward thru the summer are for the next rank.

Tips for Teaching Cub Scouts the Scout Law



Memorizing the 12 words of the Scout Law (16 if you count “A Scout is” and “and”), and getting them in the right order, can be tough for Webelos Scouts working on the Arrow of Light and even more for the Cub Scouts when it replaces the Law of the Pack this coming June. To make it easier for your Scouts you may want to check out the following article for some learning strategies that work better than rote memorization: <http://scoutingmagazine.org/2012/02/tips-for-teaching-cub-scouts-the-scout-law/>

Quizlet: Great Boy Scout Oath and Law Test



Quizlet (<http://quizlet.com>) is a free website providing learning tools for students, including flashcards, study and game modes. It was created by a high school sophomore in 2005 and now contains over 30 million study sets. All of the material is user-generated. It also has a free app available for iPhone, iPad and Android devices.

A “study set” is pretty much a list of terms and definitions. You can create your own or search for a set that someone else has created.

But here’s where it can be very helpful for our Webelos who are working on their Arrow of Light. They can study the requirements to become a Boy Scout using Quizlet! Learning the Boy Scout Oath and Law is so much easier when it’s a game. You can make your own set or use one that someone has created.

Here are some that you might like:

- Boy Scout Law (<http://quizlet.com/29883231/boy-scout-law-flash-cards/>)
- First Class Scout Badge Parts (<http://quizlet.com/3028940/first-class-scout-badge-parts-flash-cards/>)
- Boy Scout Oath and Law, Motto, Slogan, Outdoor Code & Cub Scout Promise (<http://quizlet.com/2731315/boy-scout-oath-law-motto-slogan-outdoor-code-cub-scout-promise-flash-cards/>)

Cub Scout Outdoor Activity Award



With the changes to the Cub Scout program, many of the requirements for supplemental awards have to be updated as well. One of the awards with new requirements is the Cub Scout Outdoor Activity Award. This award encourages Cub Scouts to get outdoors and develop their skills.

Cub Scouts can earn this award during each of their program years (Tiger, Wolf, Bear, Webelos). The first year they earn it, they get a pocket flap which can be worn on the right pocket of the uniform. After that, they get a pin to display on the pocket flap. The requirements are a little different depending on which year they are in, so read the requirements carefully.

Requirements for the Cub Scout Outdoor Activity Award

All Ranks

Attend Cub Scout day camp or Cub Scout/Webelos Scout resident camp. Additionally, complete the rank-specific requirements as follows:

Tiger Scouts

Complete the Backyard Jungle adventure, and complete four Outdoor Activities.

Wolf Scouts

Complete the Paws on the Path adventure, and complete five Outdoor Activities.

Bear Scouts

Complete the Bear Necessities adventure, and complete six Outdoor Activities.

Webelos Scouts

Complete the Webelos Walkabout adventure, and complete seven Outdoor Activities.

Outdoor Activities

These activities must be in addition to any similar activities counted toward rank advancement and can be accomplished as a family, a den, or a pack.

- Participate in a nature hike in your local area. This can be on an organized, marked trail, or just a hike to observe nature in your area.
- Participate in an outdoor activity such as a picnic or a fun day in a park.
- Explain the buddy system, and tell what to do if lost. Explain the importance of cooperation.
- Attend a pack overnigher. Be responsible by being prepared for the event.
- Complete an outdoor service project in your community.
- Complete a nature/conservation project in your area. This project should involve improving, beautifying, or supporting natural habitats. Discuss how this project helped you to respect nature.
- Participate in your pack's earning the Summertime Pack Award.
- Participate in a nature observation activity. Describe or illustrate and display your observations at a den or pack meeting.
- Participate in an outdoor aquatics activity. This can be an organized swim meet or just a den, pack, or family swim.
- Participate in an outdoor campfire program. Perform in a skit, sing a song, or take part in a ceremony.
- Participate in an outdoor sporting event.
- Participate in an outdoor Scouts Own or other worship service.
- Explore a local city, county, state, or national park. Discuss with your den how a good citizen obeys park rules.
- Invent an outside game, and play it outside with friends for 30 minutes.

Printable Arrow of Light Certificate Template



The Arrow of Light is the highest award a Cub Scout can earn. It is also the only Cub Scout badge that can be worn on the Boy Scout uniform.

The Arrow of Light requirements are intended to help prepare the Webelos to become Boy Scouts. The requirements familiarize the boys with the Boy Scout Oath and Law and give them an opportunity to learn more about the troop.

It is quite an honor for a young man to earn the Arrow of Light award. Many packs make or purchase plaques or ceremonial arrows for the boys. Another way to congratulate them is with a certificate that can be purchased from Scout Stuff or your local Scout Shop. This certificate is signed by the Chief Executive Scout which, to quote a fellow Scouter, “underscores the importance of the award over any rank award previously earned as a Cub Scout.”

Because some of you may want or need a printable option, CubScoutIdeas.com had this printable Arrow of Light certificate template created to share with you (<http://cubscoutideas.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Arrow-of-Light-certificate-template.pdf>). You can print the certificate and write the names on there by hand, or you can type the names on the certificate and then print it.

When you click on the file, it may open in a new tab in your browser. If it does, you’ll want to download it and open it with Adobe Reader. If you want to fill in the names before you print it, click on any of the 3 name lines and type the names directly into certificate.

Cub Scout Advancement Tracking Spreadsheets



Cubmaster Todd M. Lynch, of Pack 444 Elkton, MD, has developed a set of Excel 2013 spreadsheets to track Arrow of Light, Webelos, Bear, Wolf, and Tiger advancement under the new requirements that have just been implemented.

The spreadsheets have an instructions page (first tab) with details on how to use them and:

- Summary tables of Core and Elective Adventures for the entire den
- Individual tables for each Scout, which are automatically populated from the other tables
- Attendance - used to help you keep track of who was present at various events, such as Den Meetings, Den Outings, Pack Meetings, Campouts, etc.
- Recharter information
- Bobcat requirements and Cyber Chip requirements

The spreadsheets can be downloaded at: <http://akelascouncil.blogspot.com/> (select **Tracking Sheet** from the list of options on the right side). They are free and can be passed along to anyone who needs them.

Webelos Cast Iron Chef Nutrition Goals



In the Webelos Cast Iron Chef adventure, our Cub Scouts will learn about good nutrition. For requirement 2, they will set “personal nutritional goals,” keep a food journal for a week and review the journal to see if they’ve met their goals. For some assistance in setting up a food journal and how to set realistic goals see this article from CubScoutIdeas.com: <http://cubscoutideas.com/5137/webelos-cast-iron-chef-nutrition-goals/>

Pocket Card Forms



BoyScoutTrail.com has created two MS Word .doc files that can be useful to Cubmasters and anyone else tasked with filling out recognition item paperwork for large packs (www.boy scout trail.com/blog/1209.asp). Writing in the information for dozens of Scouts on individual cards can be quite time consuming and the Word docs are set to print the contents in the appropriate positions on pre-printed stock sheets of eight cards. These stock sheets are available from ScoutStuff.org and the BoyScoutTrail site has links to these (cost is about \$1.24 per sheet).

The first Word doc is for the new cub Scout Adventures for when a Scout receives a belt loop or pin. The second is for rank advancement.

Cub Scouts Shooting Sports Awards – Take Aim at New Fun!

SHOOTING SPORTS AWARDS



SHOOTING SPORTS AWARD PINS



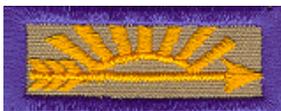
Cub Scout Shooting Sports Awards are here! To discover the new opportunities, visit the Program Updates web page (www.scouting.org/programupdates), and see the details for the inclusion of BB guns, archery, and slingshots in Cub Scout programs.

These programs may only be conducted at a district or council level and by qualified range masters and supervisors. Boys will earn the shooting sports awards in a particular order:

1. Rank-level patch. Choose a discipline: BB gun, archery, or slingshot. Complete the Level 1 requirements for that discipline.
2. Discipline device (pin). Complete the Level 2 requirements for the same discipline in which the patch was earned.
3. Additional discipline devices. Earn pins for the remaining disciplines by completing the Level 1 and Level 2 requirements in those disciplines. (Note: Both Level 1 and Level 2 requirements must be completed for each successive discipline.)

Find the Cub Scout Shooting Sports Awards Requirements at www.scouting.org/filestore/program_update/pdf/510-320_WEB.pdf

Webelos Camping



The Arrow of Light rank requires boys complete the Camper Adventure which includes a camping outing. The question often comes up – “I’m a Webelos leader, and want to take my den camping, without the rest of the pack. Is that allowed?”

The answer is “ABSOLUTELY!” The training needed to make this happen is called “Outdoor Leader Skills for Webelos Leaders.” This training course is available in your local council or district. It may just be a one day course, but is frequently offered as an overnighter. It may also be offered in conjunction with a “Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills”, which would be the Boy Scout leader version of the training.

The OLSWL training is currently under revision and is expected to be available after the first of the year. The revision will include the Basic Adult Leader Outdoor Orientation (BALOO) material and will feature one training course that will cover all Cub Scout camping options. Once the training is complete, Webelos leaders can provide opportunities for the boys to complete their Camper Adventure for the Arrow of Light rank and to be ready for the adventure of Boy Scouting.

Useful Resources for the Critter Care Adventure



One of the elective adventures for our Bear Cub Scouts is Critter Care. It's very similar to the Pet Care belt loop and pin that was part of the now retired Sports and Academics program.

Since many families have pets, keeping a section on pet care in the new program was a great decision by the Boy Scouts of America. It will also help those kids who want a pet but who need to understand more about how to care for one.

Use these resources to help your Bear as he works on the Critter Care elective adventure.

- The May-June 2004 issue of Scouting Magazine had a great article titled **Helping Children Take Care of Pets** (<http://scoutingmagazine.org/issues/0405/d-famt.html>). If your family is considering a new pet, this is a good place to start.
- Here are several worksheets that your Cub Scouts can use to reinforce the type of care that a pet needs. These would be fun gathering activities for the boys.
 - From Pet Week – **What Do Pets Need?** (www.petweek.org/assets/pdf/GradeLevel2_WhatNeed.pdf)
 - From the Humane Society – www.humanesociety.org/assets/pdfs/parents_educators/worksheets/thank_you_k-2.pdf
- To satisfy requirements 2 and 3, here is a list of dog and cat.
 - **Puppy Training for Kids** by Coleen Pelar
 - **Everything Dog: What Kids Really Want to Know about Dogs (Kids Faqs)** by Marty Crisp
 - **Puppies: Puppy Book For Kids! Learning The Fun Way To Love & Care For Your First Dog** by Gary Dickinson
 - **National Geographic Kids Everything Dogs: All the Canine Facts, Photos, and Fun You Can Get Your Paws On!** by Becky Baines
 - **ASPCA Complete Guide to Cats: Everything You Need to Know About Choosing and Caring for Your Pet** by James Richards
 - **The Complete Cat's Meow: Everything You Need to Know about Caring for Your Cat** by Darlene Arden
 - **1,001 Things You Always Wanted To Know About Cats** by J. Stephen Lang
 - **Cats (Complete Pet Owner's Manual)** by Brigitte Eilert-Overbeck
- Your Cub Scout will attempt to teach his pet a trick for requirement 4. If you have a dog, you'll want to check out these step-by-step instructions from **How to Love Your Dog** (http://images.akc.org/pdf/public_education/responsible_crossword.pdf).
- Cub Scouts no longer have to complete a pet-related service project, but it's still a great idea to do one. Use this resource that was published by the Harford County, Maryland Humane Society. The Community Service "Pet" Project guide has some awesome ideas (www.harfordshelter.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/community_service_project.pdf).
- If your son wants to learn about pets belonging to presidents, you can't go wrong with this fun book, **Presidential Pets: The Weird, Wacky, Little, Big, Scary, Strange Animals That Have Lived In The White House!**

Square Knot Song and Overhand Knot Song



Marianna from Pack 377 in Fort Meade, MD has made up two songs that she uses to help teach her Wolves about square knots and overhand knots. She is an early childhood coach by day and a Den Leader by night so her den often learns with songs.

Square Knot (Arrow of Light Adventure: Scouting Adventure)

to the tune of I'm a Little Teapot

I can tie a square knot
 Watch and see
 Right over left,
 it's easy
 Left over right,
 through the loop
 pull it tight,
 what a sight!

Overhand Knot (Wolf Adventure: Call of the Wild)

to the tune of Over There

Overhand, overhand
 Make a loop,
 pull it through,
 single strand
 Overhand,
 a knot that stops,
 overhand!

Boy Scout

Interpreting Requirement 10 for First Class?



Here's how Chris Hunt, advancement team leader for the Boy Scouts of America answers this question:

Advancement requirements are to be implemented as they are written. Requirement 10 says the boy to be asked must be "eligible to join" or be one who is "inactive." It says to "tell" the boy about the troop's activities, and then it says to "invite" the boy to either an outing, activity, service project, or meeting.

It does not say the boy must show up at any of these four kinds of opportunities, or that the boy must join. That said, it's better if the boy actually shows up and then joins, but this isn't required, and unit leaders do not have the authority to add to requirements.

In some circumstances it may be difficult to get someone to actually show or join. For example, in some rural areas there may only be a few eligible boys available, and it is possible none of them may be able to get to an activity or join the unit. If it is suspected that Scouts are inviting boys who they know are not interested in joining, or who would find it practically impossible to get to an activity or to join, then this would be a subject to explore at a board of review. Scout spirit could be at issue.

Yes, Summer Months Count Toward Advancement Time



Most Scouts are taking a break from school right now, but Scouting doesn't take summers off. Yet some troops don't do activities during this time and occasionally a Scoutmaster will say that summer months don't count toward Boy Scout advancement requirements. That means he doesn't count June, July or August as valid months required for Scouts needing four active months for Star or six active months for Life.

In response to this Mike Lo Vecchio of the BSA's Content Management Team states:

A Scout who is currently registered and has not been removed from his unit because of disciplinary reasons should not be penalized because his unit is inactive during the summer months.

Requirements completed for merit badges and ranks must be counted.

If he holds a position of responsibility during the time his unit is not active, he cannot be penalized, and his time must be counted.

As with all service hours for Second Class, Star and Life, they must be approved by the unit leader.

If service hours are to be performed during the months the unit is not active, the unit leader should not disapprove otherwise valid service and prevent the Scout from completing his requirements.

Help for Boy Scout Early Rank Requirements



Boy Scouts working on their Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class ranks might want to check out the early rank requirements videos from the BSA. These videos give step by step instructions for all of the requirements for these three ranks.

These videos should not serve as a replacement for instruction within the troop, but they will help a Scout prepare ahead of time or give additional help if he is having difficulty learning a skill. Troop Instructors might also find these videos helpful when preparing to teach younger scouts a skill.

Note: You may have trouble viewing these online videos with the Internet Explorer browser. No problems with Google Chrome though. So if you have trouble, try viewing them with a different browser.

To view the videos:

1. Go to the Early Rank Requirement Videos page
www.Scouting.org/Sitecore/content/Home/Applications/RankVideo.aspx
2. Click on the badge for the rank you are working on
3. A list of requirements for the rank will appear below the badges
4. Select the specific requirement you are working on from the list
5. The video should begin playing on the right. If it does not, make sure your browser is not waiting for permission to run the video.

Cyber Chip Requirements for Boy Scouts



With the new Boy Scout advancement requirements, the Cyber Chip must be earned for two ranks, Scout and Star. In both cases the requirement reads “and earn the Cyber Chip Award for your grade.” The Cyber Chip, however, does not have specific requirements for each grade but for 4-5th, 6-8th, and 9-12th grades.

This has raised several questions such as:

All Cyber Chips expire annually, how does that affect the process?

A Cyber Chip earned using the 6-8th grade requirements is good for all 3 years for meeting the requirements. Note the requirements says “earn” and not that it must be current (though a Scoutmaster might ask the Scout to do a refresher if it’s been a while).

What do you do about a Webelos who crosses over and has already earned the Cyber Chip for his grade, does he need to do it again as a Boy Scout for the Scout rank?

If a Scout earned the Cyber Chip using the 4-5th grade requirements as a Webelos and joins a troop while still in 5th grade he has met the Scout rank requirement. It’s not an automatic sign-off though. They still need to demonstrate to the SM or designee what they learned by simply having a conversation. If he waits to join until 6th grade, however, the previous chip award does not count and he must do it again using the 6-8 grade requirements.

Since the Cyber Chip has different requirements for grades 6-8 and 9-12 what do you do about a Scout who starts the Star process in 8th grade or before and has the Cyber Chip done, but finishes the Star requirements in 9th grade or later? Does the earlier chip award still count?

If a Scout has earned the Cyber Chip using the 6-8th grade requirements and earns the First Class rank before 9th grade, then this requirement can be signed regardless of when he actually goes before the Board of Review. If he waits to have this requirement signed off until he’s in the 9th grade, however, then he must earn it again using the 9-12th grade requirements (think of it as a procrastination penalty).

Star Cyber Chip requirement 4 (Boy Scout version, grade 6-8) requires the Scout to teach internet safety rules to the troop or a patrol, including planning and outside research. This level of coordination, time commitment, and abstract thinking seems well beyond the scope of what we expect from a new scout and seems very out of proportion to the parallel requirements in the Totin Chip and Firem’n Chit where the scout is taught an objective skill and demonstrates it.

By the time a Scout is ready to work on Star he has been in the Troop 12-18 months, is thinking about a position of responsibility, and should be switching roles from student to teacher. The requirement says to teach internet safety rules. It doesn’t say all internet safety rules. Most of examples of these rules are published in many places and should require abstract thought. The www.netsmartz.org/scouting link from the Cyber Chip page (www.scouting.org/Training/YouthProtection/CyberChip/Grades6-8.aspx) has four mini-lessons that a Scout could choose from and appropriate for 6-8th graders. Also...it doesn’t say how to teach Internet rules. The EDGE method might be incorporated into a game, an interactive skit, etc. Make sure you encourage creativity!

Cyber Chip and the Scout Rank



The new Scout rank, effective Jan. 1, 2016, includes a requirement intended to protect youth in our ever-changing cyber-community. That new requirement (#6) calls for Scouts to “earn the Cyber Chip Award for your grade.” There are four age-appropriate Cyber Chip Awards, with content based on a Scout’s grade in school.

A transitioning Webelos Scout who holds an unexpired Cyber Chip card for his current school grade has fulfilled this portion of the Scout rank requirement as part of the Webelos “Scouting Adventure.”

- If his Cyber Chip card is currently valid, he should simply demonstrate his knowledge to his Scoutmaster or other designated leader after joining the troop. This is not a retest. If, however, the Scout has not grasped these concepts, they may be reviewed (based on Cyber Chip requirements for the Scout’s current grade) to ensure understanding.
- All Cyber Chip Awards expire annually, so if a new Scout’s Cyber Chip card for his current grade has lapsed, he simply needs to “recharge” the chip by going back to the Netsmartz Recharge area (www.netsmartz.org/scouting).

For a youth joining Boy Scouts who was not a Cub Scout, the Cyber Chip award to be earned depends on his school grade while working on the Scout rank. If he has already completed the 5th grade, he would complete Cyber Chip requirements for grades 6-8, as would a Boy Scout joining in the 6th through 8th grade. If a youth joins Boy Scouts in the 9th through 12th grade, he would complete Cyber Chip requirements for grades 9-12.

Since technology and youth development are always changing, the Cyber Chip requirement must be completed again by all Boy Scouts for the Star rank regardless of any prior work. Which Cyber Chip Award requirements are to be completed for the Star rank likewise depends on that Scout’s current grade in school.

Note that there is a very limited exception to the Cyber Chip requirements . . . “if your family does not have internet access at home AND you do not have ready internet access at school or another public place or via a mobile device, the Cyber Chip portion of the requirement may be waived by your Scoutmaster in consultation with your parent or guardian.” In that event, it is understood that the Scout does not have Internet access and does not have the ability to be online.

Tenderfoot Requirement 10a-b (2016 requirement 6a-c): What is Improvement

From Ask Andy, May 20 2014., <http://netcommissioner.com/askandy/2014/05/issue-397-may-20-2014/>



Andy,

We have an 11 year-old Scout who just recently crossed over into our troop. While starting work on his Tenderfoot fitness requirement (10a), he couldn't do a single pull-up. After 30 days (for 10b) he still couldn't do a single one. Neither can most of the other new Scouts.

In my opinion, improvement over "zero" is one. This Scout's father is a new troop volunteer and a personal friend. He says his son can't do a pull-up and will never be able to do a pull-up, period! Surprisingly, his son is a football player. In his dad's opinion, improvement from zero can be as little as an inch movement. I've never heard of one thirty-sixth of a pull-up, or just lifting your chest barely off the ground counting as a push-up. But if I'm taking this the wrong way, please let me know. Thanks!

Thanks for taking the time to write about an important issue...one that's arisen before on several occasions. Rather than my offering an "opinion," I've taken the time to consult with the BSA's National Advancement Team Leader (he and I have done this before, on other advancement-related issues, and his viewpoint is not only impeccable, it's official). Here's what he has to say (with some slight paraphrasing by me)...

Tenderfoot req. 10a-b has been debated at the national level over a considerable period of time; the requirement language has been retained intentionally. Here's why...

When the BSA writes requirements—especially for the first three Boy Scout ranks—we take into consideration not just what we're trying to accomplish with an individual requirement and its sub-parts, but also the effect of the requirement language on sustaining boys for Scouting's long-haul.

For all youth members, the BSA's primary goal is general personal growth, with physical fitness a part of this goal. To achieve well-rounded personal growth, we need to keep youth involved for the long term. If our Tenderfoot physical fitness requirement drives boys away early in their Boy Scouting experience, we not only end up with no contributions to fitness, but zero accomplishment toward our overall goal.

Tenderfoot req. 10a-b has two parts. The first is 'practice;' the second, 'improvement.' This requirement says, '...practicing for 30 days.' If the Scout doesn't practice, then he hasn't fulfilled the requirement. The second part says, 'improvement;' however, it purposefully doesn't specify how much improvement. Any level of improvement is acceptable, so long as it occurs as a result of having practiced for at least the specified time.

So yes, this means that, a partial pull-up, so long as the Scout has been trying and practicing for at least 30 days, is considered improvement. So is a partial sit-up or push-up. The idea is practice to improve, and so long as both of these have happened, it's okay.

Reinforcing Scout Skills



From Ask Andy, Jan 7, 2015 (<http://netcommissioner.com/askandy/2015/01/issue-430-january-7-2015/>)

Dear Andy

Back in your column No. 424 (December 2, 2014), a Scoutmaster asked, “If the purpose of the Scoutmaster conference and the board of review are not to retest a Scout, where is the check and balance...?” and you provided your usual sage perspective. To augment your answer, there definitely is a built-in “retest;” it’s the EDGE Method for Scouts teaching Scouts. If the troop as a whole employs the EDGE Method, chances are that the Scout who might have “slid by” on tying a Bowline will sooner or later be in a position to Explain-Demonstrate-Guide-Enable a younger Scout on this skill. So, if Star Scout Sammy slid by without really learning the knot, he’ll need to either learn it PDQ or else he’s not going to look very sharp when it’s his turn to teach it. A Scoutmaster can facilitate this by arranging with the SPL that Star Scout Sammy will be teaching knot-tying to younger Scouts at next week’s troop meeting. So, Sammy finally learns his Bowline so he doesn’t embarrass himself next week. That’s the “retesting”!

Yes, the EDGE method is just about perfect for reinforcing Scout skills. We learn best when we teach others. Of course, one doesn’t “slide by” with most of the Scoutcraft skills: He can either do them, or he can’t. There’s no such knot as a “sorta-bowline.” But teaching others definitely means the Scout has mastery. Just be sure to give him plenty of notice. It would be pretty unfair to tell him, with a 5-minute warning. “Oh, you’re teaching flint n’ steel fire-starting tonight.” This is why the EDGE method is included in several rank requirements.

Of course, another way—one which reinforces and is not intended to be a replacement for EDGE—is to (here’s really weird concept...) at troop meetings and on camp-outs, **PLAY GAMES THAT USE THE SKILLS!**

FAQ on the New Boy Scout Requirement Duty to God



What if, during a Scoutmaster conference or board of review, a Scout says that he does not believe in God?

A Scout is called to do his duty to God by both the Scout Oath and Scout Law, and his belief in God should be acknowledged by his parent or guardian’s signature on the BSA Youth Application. A Scout’s declaration that he does not believe in God is grounds to deny rank advancement and could affect his continued membership in the troop. The situation should be approached with the utmost caution, recognizing that the Scout and his family are best served by a process in which the Scout remains positively engaged in his Scouting pursuits. Troop leadership should not attempt to counsel the Scout, but should contact the boy’s parents or guardians and allow the family time to discuss the situation with the youth. If the issue arises at a board of review, the board should be adjourned and reconvened at a later date, giving the family an opportunity to conduct that discussion with their son.

Follow -Up: Duty to God in 2016 Boy Scout Requirements



The following question was submitted to the National Advancement Team requesting clarification on the new Boy Scout rank "Duty to God" requirements.

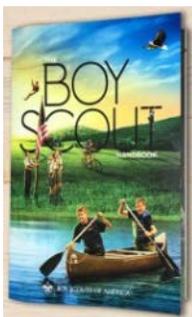
Q. The article in Sept/Oct 2015 *Advancement News*, page 4, "Scout Spirit and Duty to God: It's a Monologue, Not a Dialogue," has raised a few questions. The duty to God question is asked, the youth responds, and the board of review continues regardless of his answer... is this what is intended?

A. "It's a monologue, not a dialogue" effectively sums up the roles of youth and leader concerning any "duty to God"/higher being question during a board of review or unit leader conference. The new Boy Scout rank requirements call for a Scout to "Tell how you have done your duty to God..." It is appropriate for leaders to ask that question of a youth, but then leaders need to listen. Asking an additional question to clarify a youth's response is reasonable—or if the youth responds, "I don't know," a leader might ask a more thought-provoking question. Adult leaders should remember that Boy Scout-age youth are growing in many ways, including their religious beliefs. It is not the role of the unit leader or a board of review to evaluate how a youth goes about fulfilling his duty to God. The BSA does not seek to interpret God, higher being, or religion; interpretation is the responsibility of the Scout, his parents, and his religious leaders.

However, a youth professing no belief in any higher being is not an acceptable answer with respect to the BSA advancement program. In fact, no belief whatsoever actually raises a BSA membership issue. When every youth joins the BSA his parents or guardians signed his BSA Youth Application (www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/524-406A.pdf), acknowledging the BSA's Declaration of Religious Principle. Furthermore, the Scout Oath states a Scout observe a "duty to God," and the Scout Law includes a Scout is "reverent."

If the youth professes no belief in any higher being during a board of review at any rank, the board should adjourn, provide the BSA's Declaration of Religious Principle to the Scout and his family, explain how it affects BSA membership and advancement, and allow time for the family or their religious leader to counsel the youth. The board of review can then be reconvened at a later date.

#HandbookHacks

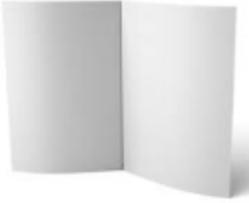


We all know and love the handbook. Yours is probably worn out, tattered and always by your side. It teaches us everything from how to start a fire to how to spot a cyberbully. It helps you excel at Scouting adventures – and life. And, it's time to share what you know with the world.

As the Boy Scouts of America releases the 13th edition of the Boy Scout Handbook, ScoutingWire (<http://ScoutingWire.org>) is launching a new social media campaign called #HandbookHacks. The handbook is full of life hacks that Scouts can teach their parents, their friends and everyone else. Their first handbook hack breaks down geocaching. Check out this video, www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=xFDyk-S8zZc, to take a look. In a few simple steps, families can enjoy an afternoon treasure hunt right in their hometowns.

What is your go-to handbook hack? What skill do you have that you think everyone should know how to do? Tell us on social media using the hashtag #handbookhacks. Show us by creating your own handbook hack video. ScoutingWire will follow along and share your content on BSA's channels to encourage other Scouts to get hacking! They can't wait to show you their next hack!

Pamphlet Explores Methods of Improving Rate of Advancement



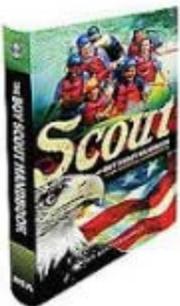
Earlier this year the National Advancement Committee announced the publication of a guide that should help units, districts, and councils achieve their Journey to Excellence goals in the areas of advancement and retention. Appropriately titled “On Increasing Advancement,” No. 512-047, this compact resource explores key ideas that advancement coordinators can apply toward improving the level of advancement in councils, districts, and units.

Designed to be used in conjunction with “Recommendations for Regional and Area Volunteers Supporting the Advancement Program,” No. 512-048, “On Increasing Advancement” targets six areas that drive increased advancement:

- *A general increase in volunteerism.* A dramatic increase in volunteerism across the board is needed. This can be achieved through prospecting methods such as those outlined in Friendstorming on Tour.
- *Far-reaching unit service.* Increases in advancement result from effective unit service, expanded training opportunities, and improving the function of roundtables.
- *Fully functioning advancement committees.* Advancement increases when advancement committees at all levels are fully staffed and well trained.
- *Promotion and reinforcement of procedural compliance.* A clear understanding and application of national procedures and related local council practices result not only in increased advancement but in retention of members through consistent and purposeful program delivery.
- *Purposeful management.* Increased advancement indicates the presence of an effective unit program that drives retention. Purposeful focus on advancement at all levels of management not only affects metrics, but aids in program improvement and thus retention.
- *Increased reporting and proper data entry.* The use of Internet Advancement has resulted in increased and more accurate reporting over the past few years. A renewed focus on promoting and encouraging the use of Internet Advancement will make it easier to connect broader efforts with increases in advancement.

Both “On Increasing Advancement” and “Recommendations for Regional and Area Volunteers Supporting the Advancement Program” can be found online at www.scouting.org/BoyScouts/AdvancementandAwards/resources.aspx.

What Happens if a Scout Loses his Boy Scout Handbook?



The loss of the Scout’s handbook does not negate the requirements he has already completed, so he would not have to start from scratch. With unit advancement software and other tools, his advancement can be confirmed. The dates and signatures entered into the handbook are for the Scout’s benefit and an added means to prove completion.

As for what to do now, a Scout may purchase another handbook and, based on his current advancement records (unit software, ScoutNET, and advancement reports), the unit leadership can go through and supply the dates and initial the completed requirements.

Can One Activity Fulfill Two (or more) Scout Requirements?



Can an activity used to meet one Scout requirement count toward the completion of another? The short answer? It's complicated. The long answer? For that, look at section 4.2.3.6 (page 28) of the *Guide to Advancement* (www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/33088.pdf).

Times when it's OK

There are times when one activity can be used for two Scout requirements. Take camping nights, for example. To earn Second Class, a Scout must participate in five separate troop/patrol activities, two of which include overnight camping. (In 2016, that number jumps to three from two). To earn the next rank, First Class, he must participate in 10 separate troop/patrol activities (other than troop/patrol meetings), three of which include overnight camping. (In 2016, that number jumps to six from three.)

But the most important words of those requirements: "Since joining." That means the five activities used for Second Class count toward First Class as well. That's an example of one activity (or, technically, five) being used toward multiple requirements.

Safety-related requirements are another good example. A Scout who learns CPR for one requirement doesn't need to relearn it for another, as long as his Scoutmaster or merit badge counselor believes he still remembers the skill.

Times when it's not

Some requirements appear to be candidates for double duty but really aren't. Take the merit badges Communication and Citizenship in the Community. Each requires the Scout to attend a public meeting, but that's where the similarities end. From the *Guide*:

For Communication, the Scout is asked to practice active listening skills during the meeting and present an objective report that includes all points of view. For Citizenship, he is asked to examine differences in opinions and then to defend one side. The Scout may attend the same public meeting, but to pass the requirements for both merit badges he must actively listen and prepare a report, and also examine differences in opinion and defend one side.

So while he could attend the same meeting for both requirements, his post-meeting activities are different. For Communication MB, he'll need to prepare the report. For Citizenship in the Community MB, he'll need to have a conversation with his counselor. The distinction is subtle, but it's important.

A challenge

The last two paragraphs of the relevant section in the *Guide* are powerfully written. They challenge both the Scout and his leader to think about their motivations behind counting one activity for two requirements.

The Scout is challenged to consider whether to "undertake a second effort and make a greater difference in the lives of even more people." The Scouter is asked whether he or she wants to "produce Scouts who check a task off a list or Scouts who will become the leaders in our communities."

Online Advancement Videocast Library



A while ago a team of volunteers set out to answer a simple question: Wouldn't it be great if we could economically combine the visual impact of PowerPoint with a well-delivered audio message? The team began experimenting with voice-over scripts that could not only be keyed to PowerPoint slides, but that could be conversational rather than sound as if a reader were using a script. The experiments were taped, coordinated with the slides, and converted to movie format. The result was a fun and engaging experience.

Realizing the potential this format had for becoming a powerful yet economical teaching tool, the team next set out to develop a videocast for each section of the Guide to Advancement and the Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook. Their efforts produced nine exceptionally helpful videocasts that are now posted on the advancement resources Web page:

www.scouting.org/BoyScouts/AdvancementandAwards/resources.aspx.

Look for "Advancement Educational Presentations." Each presentation can be downloaded or viewed directly via a link to YouTube:

- Introduction to the Guide to Advancement (10 minutes)
- Judgment Calls (24 minutes; covering the "active," position of responsibility, and Scout spirit requirements, and also "reasonable expectations")
- The Merit Badge Program (17 minutes)
- Boards of Review (15 minutes)
- Boards of Review Under Disputed Circumstances (6 minutes)
- Board of Review Appeals (4 minutes)
- The Eagle Scout Service Project (17 minutes)
- The Eagle Scout Application Process (8 minutes)
- Eagle Scout Boards of Review (4 minutes)

Scoutmaster Conference / Board of Review

How to Ruin a Board of Review

Excerpt from Bobwhite Blather: <http://bobwhiteblather.com/how-to-ruin-a-board-of-review/>



There is much advice on the conduct of a board of review. The canonical definition is contained within the Guide to Advancement (www.scouting.org/Home/GuideToAdvancement.aspx). In fact, it is such an important function in our program that an entire chapter (Chapter 8) is devoted to the subject.

The board of review should be looked up on as an informal chat, a chance to get to know the Scout, find out how he is enjoying his experience, what's going on in his life, and what he's looking forward to.

We have plenty of advice on what to do in a board of review, but how about some of what not to do? Here, then, are a few ways to ruin a board of review:

- **Interrupt the Scout.** We all love to tell stories, and we think nothing of jumping into the middle of something the Scout is saying to tell him about situations of our own, or to tell the right way to do something, or change the subject. **Do:** Let him speak. It's his board of review, not yours.
- **Don't make eye contact.** Looking around the room, or at your phone or your watch, send the subliminal message that you're not interested in what the Scout has to say. **Do:** While you don't have to stare, make eye contact when the Scout is talking. It's a courtesy and it lets the Scout know you are paying attention to him.
- **Use negative body language.** Slouching in your chair, crossing your arms or tapping your fingers can give the impression that you're bored and just want it to be over. Believe me, the Scout probably does, too, but he is showing you the courtesy of being attentive to you. **Do:** Show him through your body language that you respect him and take his interests to heart.
- **Lecture him.** Again, we love to talk and adults are full of advice for young people. A board of review is no time for a lecture from an adult (for that matter, it's rare that adults should lecture Scouts at all). Don't try to give him cooking lessons, merit badge advice or tell him how to do his job. **Do:** Ask him about his experiences. Ask what he likes best about Scouting or his patrol. Was there something he learned to do that he'd like to tell you about?
- **Act like you know it all.** Maybe you were a Scout as a youth; maybe not, but you think you know all about Scouting. Chances are you don't really know what it's like to be a boy in a patrol or a troop. **Do:** Try to understand Scouting from his perspective. Be genuinely interested in what he has to say and ask insightful questions that draw him out to talk about it.

A properly conducted board of review is a learning experience – as much for the board members than it is for the Scout. He is teaching you what he knows about the youth experience so you can better understand it and support the troop program to make it better. Take advantage of the opportunity to enrich your own knowledge, while helping the Scout to better understand his own.

Understanding the Scoutmaster Conference



From the Boy Scout joining requirements to Eagle Palms, the Scoutmaster conference is a constant. A Scout must participate in such a conference when he joins a troop and at every step along the advancement trail. Some Scouters don't understand the purpose of this meeting, viewing it as little more than a paperwork exercise or a dress rehearsal for the board of review. Savvy Scouters, however, grasp its value and importance.

WHAT IS A SCOUTMASTER CONFERENCE? It's simply a visit between the Scoutmaster and a Scout. (In a Varsity Scout team, the Coach conducts the conference.) During the conference, the two can discuss the Scout's ambitions and life purpose, set goals for future achievement (both in Scouting and beyond), review the Scout's participation in the troop and explore his understanding and practice of the ideals of Scouting. The conference also gives the Scoutmaster an opportunity to solicit feedback on the troop program and any challenges the Scout is facing.

HOW LONG SHOULD A SCOUTMASTER CONFERENCE LAST? Conferences should last 10 to 15 minutes, although those for Eagle Scouts might last 30 minutes or more.

WHERE SHOULD THESE CONFERENCES TAKE PLACE? They can be conducted at troop meetings, during outdoor activities or in the Scout's home (provided a parent is also present). Given the relaxed nature of many outings, a campsite can be a good setting. Each conference should be a private discussion between the Scoutmaster and a Scout, but it must be held in full view of other people in accordance with the BSA's Youth Protection policy.

CAN A SCOUT FAIL A SCOUTMASTER CONFERENCE? No, it is not a test. Note that a Scout must participate or take part in a conference, not pass it.

CAN THE SCOUTMASTER RETEST THE SCOUT ON REQUIREMENTS? No (nor may the board of review).

IF A SCOUT SETS A GOAL DURING A SCOUTMASTER CONFERENCE, DOES HE HAVE TO ACHIEVE IT? No. However, it makes sense to follow up with him later and to provide encouragement. Some Scoutmasters take notes after each conference and review them before meeting with a Scout again.

DOES THE SCOUTMASTER CONFERENCE HAVE TO BE THE LAST REQUIREMENT COMPLETED FOR A RANK? No. While it can make sense to hold a conference after other requirements for a rank have been met, the conference doesn't have to be the last step before the board of review.

CAN I HOLD A SCOUTMASTER CONFERENCE FOR A SCOUT WHO IS NOT ADVANCING? Yes. In fact, that would be a good way to find out if the Scout is having problems.

CAN I DELEGATE SCOUTMASTER CONFERENCES TO ANOTHER ADULT LEADER? Yes, under limited circumstances. For example, if the troop is so large that the Scoutmaster can't handle them all, he or she might delegate some of them to an assistant Scoutmaster. Keep in mind, however, that if a Scout sees different leaders along his trail to Eagle, he won't have the chance to develop a relationship with the Scoutmaster, and the conferences can't build on what has been discussed previously.

CAN I DENY A SCOUT A SCOUTMASTER CONFERENCE IF I FEEL HE'S NOT READY? No. Since the conference is not a test the Scout can fail, there's nothing he needs to be ready for.

WHO CONDUCTS SCOUTMASTER CONFERENCES FOR A VENTURER WORKING ON BOY SCOUT ADVANCEMENT? If a First Class Scout is continuing his Boy Scout advancement work in Venturing or Sea Scouting, his Advisor or Skipper conducts the conference. If the Scout maintains dual registration, the Scoutmaster and Advisor or Skipper should decide who will oversee his Boy Scout advancement.

Scoutmaster Conference Myths



Myth No. 1: *The Scoutmaster (unit leader) conference is the last step before a board of review.*

Myth No. 2: *A Scout can “fail” a Scoutmaster conference and be held back from a board of review.*

Topic 4.2.3.5 in the *Guide to Advancement* breaks both these myths. “While it makes sense to hold [a Scoutmaster or unit leader conference] after other requirements for a rank are met, it is not required that it be the last step before the board of review.” Some leaders hold more than one conference along the way, and any of them can count toward the requirement.

Requirements for each rank state, “Participate in a Scoutmaster conference.” This is not a pass/fail requirement. Topic 4.2.3.5 states, “[The conference] is not a ‘test.’ Requirements do not say he must ‘pass’ a conference.” If an Eagle Scout candidate’s conference is denied or the unit leader refuses to sign a candidate’s Eagle application, this becomes grounds for requesting a board of review under disputed circumstances (See *Guide to Advancement* topic 8.0.3.2).

A Scoutmaster conference should not become just another requirement for rank advancement. It should be a rewarding opportunity for a unit leader to form a bond with each member, whether advancing or not. It is more about using the Scouting method of positive adult association than it is about using the method of advancement.

Location is important to a good conference. While virtually any place that supports BSA Youth Protection guidelines is acceptable, some settings provide for more relaxed conversation. A unit leader may find that conferences held during outings are less subject to interruption than those held during regular meetings.

When we examine the four steps to advancement, the unit leader conference is the first part of the “Scout Is Reviewed” step. The second part is the board of review. However, neither is a retest of skills. A unit leader should plan conferences carefully. Trust is a vital element. Listening is another. Hearing about the Scout’s life outside troop activities is just as important as his experiences in the unit. Emphasizing the Scout Oath and Scout Law, setting goals, promoting additional responsibility, sharing ideas, and providing positive reinforcement should be reflected upon.

Scoutmaster’s Conference FAQ



Scoutmaster Clarke Green has put together a comprehensive look at the Scoutmaster’s conference (<http://scoutmastercg.com/scoutmasters-conference-faq/>). All of the references listed are official publications of the BSA (the *Guide to Advancement 2013* and the *Scoutmaster’s Handbook*). He has not added any personal commentary or opinion because he thinks the resources can speak for themselves.

The Four Elements Behind Every Great Scoutmaster's Minute



Since at least 1925, troops have been setting aside time near the end of their meetings for the Scoutmaster's minute.

In those 60 seconds (or, let's be honest, usually a little longer), the Scoutmaster shares a story, a parable or an anecdote that helps Scouts think about Scouting and life in a new way. (Note for Venturing and Cub Scouting leaders: These same principles apply to a Cubmaster's minute or Crew Advisor's minute.)

The February 1927 issue of Scouting magazine offered a nice description of the Scoutmaster's minute that still holds true nearly 90 years later: "The Scoutmaster says a word, tells a story or in his own way gives the boys a bit of inspiration in the way of a reminder of the Oath and Law."

There's magic behind a Scoutmaster's minute, but the formula isn't a secret, says John Duncan, council commissioner with the Northeast Illinois Council. In the February 2016 ScoutCast, the BSA's monthly podcast for Boy Scout leaders, Duncan offers four elements behind every great Scoutmaster's minute.

1. Relevance

Is this topic important to the people who are listening?

2. Sincerity

Do you truly believe what you're saying or is this some trite cliché that you read out of the book and you're reading it back?

3. Credibility

Do you exemplify what you are saying? If you aren't visibly doing your best on your honor, then you come across as a hypocrite and that is the worst possible thing that could happen with a Scoutmaster's Minute.

4. Passion

How important is this topic to you as the speaker?

These four tips are just a small taste of what Duncan shares in the ScoutCast, so be sure to take a few minutes and listen. You won't want to miss his "performance" of his personal favorite Scoutmaster's minute. It'll give you goosebumps.

Listen or read the transcript by going to www.scouting.org/Scoutcast/Scoutcast/2016.aspx. Or search for "ScoutCast" on your favorite podcasting app. For example, if you have an iPhone, just search for "ScoutCast" in the Apple Podcasts app, tap Subscribe and listen right on your phone!

Merit Badges

This is How to Earn a Merit Badge



All Scouts and Scout leaders 'know' the process for earning a merit badge, or do we? Sometimes it's good to just look at the whole process as a reminder.

The following info is lifted straight from the Guide to Advancement, page 49 (section 7.0.3.0).

But first, an important reminder from the Guide:

Earning merit badges should be Scout initiated, Scout researched, and Scout learned. It should be hands-on and interactive, and should not be modeled after a typical school classroom setting. Instead, it is meant to be an active program so enticing to young men that they will want to take responsibility for their own full participation.

The recommended process for earning merit badges (Note: underlines are from the newsletter editor):

1. The Scout develops an interest in a merit badge and may begin working on the requirements.
2. The Scout discusses his interest in the merit badge with his unit leader.
3. The unit leader signs a blue card and provides the Scout with at least one counselor contact.
4. The Scout contacts the counselor.
5. The counselor considers any work toward requirements completed prior to the initial discussion with the unit leader.
6. The Scout, his buddy and the counselor meet (often several times).
7. The Scout finishes the requirements.
8. The counselor approves completion.
9. The Scout returns the signed blue card to his unit leader, who signs the applicant record section of the blue card.
10. The unit leader gives the Scout the applicant record.
11. The unit reports the merit badge to the council.
12. The Scout receives his merit badge.

Merit Badge Completion – From Dear Andy (No. 298 – March 20, 2012)



Dear Andy,

On merit badges, I can't find anything written by the BSA about how long a Scout has to complete a merit badge once he's started it. A troop has set a time limit, and if the Scout doesn't complete in that space of time frame he must start over. I don't agree with this, but I can't find any support. Can you help me here?

The BSA informs us that a Scout has until his 18th birthday to complete a merit badge, which he can start at any time once he's a registered Boy Scout. For a troop to try to enforce some arbitrary time limit of its own, much more in opposition to standard BSA national policy, is totally inappropriate; in fact, it's an unequivocal and unacceptable violation. You'll find the statement in BOY SCOUT REQUIREMENTS and of course in the GUIDE TO ADVANCEMENT.

Completing Partial Merit Badges



Partials refer to merit badges that for whatever reason are not completed during the summer camp session. The Scout has done some of the requirements towards being awarded the merit badge but for one reason or another, has not been able to cover all of them. Partials may also occur when a Scout starts the badge with a counselor who has since moved away or retired from Scouting while the Scout is still working on the requirements, or most likely, taking a break from working on the requirements.

To finish the merit badge it is up to the Scout to make an appointment with another merit badge counselor to complete the missing requirements. There is no requirement that the original counselor be the one to whom they go or that they have to wait till the next summer camp to complete it. If troop level or district level merit badge counselors exist for the subject badge, the wise Scoutmaster, Troop Advancement Chair, and/or Troop Committee would make certain that the list of those counselors is readily available to the Scout so he knows where to begin the trail to completion.

Important Facts:

- The only expiration date on a partial is the Scout turning 18. If a Scout got the partial when they were 11 they can still complete it when they are 17 years and 11 months old.
- The only requirements the Scout needs to do are the ones not signed on the Blue Card. The new merit badge counselor cannot make a Scout redo a signed requirement as a test or not accept it because they suspect the 'quality' of the work done. If it's been signed then it's done, period. Conversely, if all the Scout has is a worksheet from camp of what was done and it wasn't also signed on the Blue Card then it officially wasn't done and it is up to the counselor on whether to accept it or not.

Changes in the merit badge requirements that have occurred since the partial was done are not to be considered. The Scout must complete only the requirements in place when the badge was started. This means that any new requirements do not have to be done, on the other hand, any requirements that were dropped but were not completed do have to be done.

Merit Badge Group Policy



Current guidance from the *Guide to Advancement* and newly released *Merit Badge Group Instruction Guide* (www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/512-066_WEB.pdf) has focused on making sure that group instruction focuses on maintaining the high quality merit badge program we expect and that these events now require Council or district approval for group instruction to occur.

Council policy is that a troop or a crew can use group instruction of merit badges within their unit without seeking approval from the council or district. However, if the unit decides to offer the merit badge opportunity to Scouts outside their unit it must get district advancement committee approval to conduct the event. This approval can come from either the District Merit Badge Dean or the Advancement Committee Chair.

It is important to note that outside organizations and businesses are not allowed to present classes, events, or similar activities that are largely for the purpose of offering merit badges – even if no fee is involved – without approval from Council.

What is (and what isn't) a camping night for the Camping MB?



When it comes to finding a place to spend the night, Boy Scouts have seemingly limitless options: tent, hammock, cabin, retired battleship, museum, church gymnasium, baseball stadium, sleeping bag under the stars. All of these locations offer a great experience for Scouts, but only some count as camping — at least when it comes to the Camping merit badge. Camping merit badge requirement 9a says:

“Camp a total of 20 nights ...”

- This means 20 overnights, so a weekend trip from Friday through Sunday is two nights. Complete 10 such trips, and you've got the 20 you need.
- All campouts since becoming a Boy Scout or Varsity Scout may count toward this requirement. In other words, a Scout doesn't need a blue card for the Camping MB before he may begin counting these nights. Any nights as a Boy Scout or Varsity Scout are eligible.

“... at designated Scouting activities or events.”

- This means the experiences are held under the auspices of some level of the BSA, and that “Scouting” happens on them. For example, an individual family or a couple of Scouts and their parents heading off into the woods doesn't count.

“One long-term camping experience of up to six consecutive nights may be applied toward this requirement.”

- A long-term camping experience is at least five consecutive nights. The long-term camping experience must also be a “designated Scouting activity or event.” This could be at a council summer camp or on a troop's own 50 miler, a Jamboree, high-adventure base, etc.
- Only one of these experiences is allowed, and up to six nights may count toward the requirement.
- If a Scout goes on a 10-night trek or a 20-night trek or a 100-night trek (!), only six of those nights will count.
- If a Scout goes to summer camp twice for a total of 12 nights, only one of the summer camps will count — for up to six nights.
- As a workaround to use some long term camping to meet the other 14 camping nights required some parents will send their son to summer camp, but then take him home after four nights so the experience will not count as a long-term camp. This doesn't fulfill the requirement. A long-term summer camp is still a long-term camp even if the Scout is there for only a portion of the time. It's an entirely different adventure and usually doesn't call for the same level of self-reliance required for a short term camp.

“Sleep each night under the sky or in a tent you have pitched. If the camp provides a tent that has already been pitched, you need not pitch your own tent.”

- All 20 nights must be spent under the sky or in a tent, so nights in cabins, lean tos, and other buildings don't count.
- If camping is done at a camp that provides tents that are already set up, then all is good. If tents are not already pitched, the Scout must pitch his tent. If he is sleeping in a two-man tent, then it would be reasonable the he and his buddy set the tent up together. Sleeping in a tent that Dad or the Scoutmaster, etc., pitched doesn't count.

Why Most Merit Badge 'Prerequisites' Really Aren't Prerequisites



Often merit badge fairs/days/nights and summer camps will list the merit badges being offered and next to each the prerequisites. Looking up the definition of prerequisite from Merriam-Webster finds:

noun | pre-req-ui-site | something that you officially must have or do before you can have or do something else

The key word here is 'before' and if you go through the requirements for all 136 merit badges looking for that word you'll find that in reality only three merit badges actually have prerequisites that need to be done before the event:

- Scuba Diving – requirement #2 states that Swimming MB must be earned before doing requirements 3 through 6,
- Whitewater – requirement #3 states that either Canoeing MB or Kayaking MB must be earned before doing requirements 4 through 12, and
- Personal Fitness – requirement #1 states that your health-care practitioner must give you a physical examination before doing requirements 2 through 9.

Notes:

- All of the aquatic merit badges (Canoeing, Kayaking, Lifesaving, Motorboating, Rowing, Small Boat Sailing, Swimming, and Water Sports) require the Scout to pass the BSA Swimmer Test before doing the other requirements. Lifesaving also requires some of the 2nd Class and 1st Class swimming requirements be done. These requirements, however, are usually covered at the beginning of the session or camp.
- Sustainability – requirement #1 states that a Scout must write in his own words the meaning of sustainability before doing any of the other requirements. Like the aquatic badges this requirement is usually covered as part of the session.
- Emergency Preparedness – requirement #1 states the Scout must earn the First Aid MB, but it does not have that key word 'before' in it, so it's just another requirement that needs to be done, sometime. A Scout can do all of the other requirements for this merit badge but it cannot be completed until First Aid is earned.

So what do the organizers of these events mean when they say prerequisite? What they are actually saying is here are the requirements that won't/can't be covered during the course and that need to be done by the Scout beforehand if he wants to **complete** the merit badge by the end of the course, otherwise all he'll receive is a partial. A Scout who doesn't do the prerequisites can still take the class and complete the offered requirements. Once they complete the class and do other requirements on their own, another merit badge counselor will be able to check them out and complete the blue card.

We do urge the Scouts, however, to do the 'prerequisites' and complete the merit badge and avoid partials because they are often set aside and only completed later (in some cases years later) when needed for a rank advancement.

How to Add Interest to the Citizenship in the Community Merit Badge



To many adults, discussing citizenship is inspiring. To many Scouts, it's sleep-inducing. Especially when working on the Citizenship in the Community merit badge.

"If you just talk about 'What does it mean to be a citizen?', they're going to go to sleep," says Danny Van Horn, a Memphis attorney who serves as council commissioner of the Chickasaw Council. The solution, he says, is to focus on what Scouts find interesting, mixing in discussions of citizenship the way a parent might hide vegetables in a casserole.

Rather than turn the badge into a civics class, Van Horn highlights relevant examples of citizen action. For example, since many of his Scouts run or ride bikes on the Shelby Farms Greenline, he explains how a group of citizens made the popular rails-to-trails project happen. "It wasn't some random government person," he explains. "It was a group of citizens who got together and said, 'This is something that's important to us.'"

Van Horn likes to connect requirement 4 (learning about a local issue) with requirement 7 (working with a local charitable organization). He encourages each Scout to focus on an issue that affects him personally and then get involved with an organization that's addressing that issue. "The Scouts who get more out of the merit badge are the ones who tie their service hours to some community issue that they want to work on," he says. One Scout admitted that homeless people in downtown Memphis made him uneasy, so Van Horn connected him with the Memphis Union Mission. Another Scout was proud of the city's musical heritage, so he volunteered with Stax Music Academy.

One of the most nap-producing parts of Citizenship in the Community is the visit to a council meeting, school board meeting or court session (requirement 3). Before Van Horn takes a group of Scouts to a Memphis City Council meeting, he likes to get a copy of the agenda and pick an issue they might find interesting. He presents both sides of the issue to his Scouts — or has them research the issue — and holds an informal debate. The Scouts then guess how council members will vote. At the council meeting, he says, "When that item comes up on the agenda, they actually listen because they have some context with which to understand the conversation."

Piquing Scouts' interest is also important with requirement 5 (watching a movie that shows citizens in action). Lots of movies could work, but Van Horn's go-to choices are sports movies like *Remember the Titans*. Although most of his Scouts have seen that film before, "by the end, they've looked at it in a new light," he says.

Van Horn strives to achieve the same goal with the whole badge. He wants Scouts to understand how their community came to be and how they can make it better: "To me, the whole idea behind Citizenship in the Community is a realization that you don't have to be a politician to make a difference in your community."

When Should Merit Badges be Handed Out



From Ask Andy, <http://netcommissioner.com/askandy/2015/11/issue-459-november-3-2015/>

Dear Andy,

Do merit badges fall under “immediate recognition,” like rank advancement? Or can a troop withhold earned and completed merit badges until a court of honor? Would you point me to any documentation clarifying this issue, please?

Yes, they certainly do. Only a very foolish (if not renegade) troop would arbitrarily withhold presenting a Scout with his newest rank or merit badge(s) as rapidly as possible. A court of honor is for acknowledging what Scouts have accomplished since the last court of honor. It's not for the actual presentation of the ranks or merit badges. Check the BSA's GUIDE TO ADVANCEMENT for details on this and much more.

Editor Note: The Guide to Advancement can be found at www.Scouting.org/ScoutSource/GuideToAdvancement.aspx or if you would like the PDF version, www.Scouting.org/FileStore/pdf/33088.pdf

Reporting Merit Badge Counseling Concerns



Topic 7.0.0.1 in the *Guide to Advancement* reminds us that the benefits of the BSA merit badge program extend well beyond simply providing opportunities to learn new skills and gain new knowledge. In addition to introducing Scouts to areas of interest that can lead to lifetime hobbies and even careers, this program is founded on individual initiative. A Scout develops confidence as he works with adults he might not normally associate with to plan, organize, maintain a schedule, and overcome obstacles as they occur.

However, what happens when a unit leader discovers that a Scout, through no fault of his own, has not learned or done as much as a merit badge's requirements suggest? Perhaps a merit badge counselor working with a Scout to complete a summer camp “partial”, notes that the Scout just does not understand some of the items that were marked off. Maybe a committee member sitting on a board of review learns from a Scout that due to time constraints at camp, an “alternative option” was substituted for one of the rank requirements.

Is there a way to correct these situations so future Scouts pursuing this merit badge may get full benefit from the program? You can find the answer (which is “yes,” by the way) in Topic 7.0.4.7. It's also very important to recall that unit leaders cannot re-test Scouts when they turn in signed blue cards; that practice is prohibited. Should you encounter a situation you believe requires action, see topic 7.0.4.7 for guidance (and a form) on how to deal with the situation in a manner that does not penalize the Scout; who in most cases should never be made aware that an issue existed.

MB Counselor – Signing Requirements for a Group Event



Merit Badge Counselors should take special care about signing requirements when they have a group of Scouts for a class/event.

Differentiate Between Instruction and Completing Requirements. Some events present opportunities for Scouts to learn skills without being able to actually and personally demonstrate or discuss a requirement. In these cases, the requirement must not be marked as completed. Clarify this before the event, and provide instructions for Scouts to complete it after the event.

Make Certain Each Scout Personally Completes Each Requirement. Group instruction does not mean group testing. Each Scout must complete each requirement as written, without exception. For example, if the requirement says to discuss or demonstrate, then each Scout must individually discuss or demonstrate whatever is required. It is not acceptable for the Scout to listen to someone else discuss or demonstrate the subject. There are no exceptions due to lack of facilities, materials, appropriate weather, or time. “Group tasks” do not fulfill requirements except in those cases where a group is needed to perform a specific task as stated in the requirement.

Can a Scoutmaster Refuse to Give a Blue Card?



Here’s how Chris Hunt, advancement team leader for the Boy Scouts of America answers this question:

The policies regarding blue cards changed with the release of the 2013 edition of the Guide to Advancement. See topic 7.0.0.3. Unit leaders do not have the authority to refuse to give a Scout a blue card.

The signature on a blue card signifies, simply, that the unit leader has had a discussion about the badge with the Scout and that the Scout has been provided the name of at least one registered and approved counselor.

The discussion should cover what the Scout might face as he challenges the badge. The SM, for example, may suggest that a Scout wait to take Shotgun Shooting until he is strong enough to lift the weapon. The SM could also suggest that it would be wise for a Scout to finish up the badges he’s already begun, and so on. The Scout, however, regardless of the advice of the SM, is free to pursue the badge.

He may also choose a different registered and approved counselor if he wants to. The blue card has been revised and reprinted to reflect this change, but there are still many old blue cards out there.

Counselor’s Compass



Counselor’s Compass is a quarterly newsletter designed for merit badge counselors, council and district advancement committees, and related staff advisors. Any Scouting volunteer or professional may subscribe.

To subscribe send a message to merit.badge@scouting.org, with “SUBSCRIBE” in the subject line. Indicate your name, email address, and council in the message text.

Online Resource – Merit Badge Counselor Resource Page



A new BSA Web page is available for merit badge counselors searching for just the right resources. Recently posted, it contains informational fliers on all the newest merit badges – including Sustainability, Programming, Cycling, and Game Design.

You will find information on upcoming merit badges, a section on how to propose new merit badges, plus the latest news about competitions and scholarships. In addition, there are links to specific sites supporting merit badge requirements. The “Introduction to Merit Badges” link takes the Scouter on an informative walk through the merit badge process and then displays all the merit badges with links to requirements. For access, visit

www.scouting.org/sitecore/content/Home/BoyScouts/GuideforMeritBadgeCounselors.aspx

CS2N Offers Free Resources to Earn Robotics Badge



CS2N, or Computer Science Student Network, has partnered with the BSA to offer free training and resources specifically for Scouts earning the Robotics merit badge. Scouts can download a 60-day copy of the Robot Virtual World Software to complete the Robotics merit badge (www.cs2n.org/activities/robot-virtual-worlds).

In addition, there is a CS2N course specifically designed for Scouts and leaders to help boys earn the badge. For access to all the training material and software, visit www.cs2n.org/partners/boy-scouts/.

There you'll find a variety of tools and resources for our Scouting community, including:

- Teacher resources for Scout leaders
- How-to videos
- Fun, interactive games and activities
- Learning opportunities

CS2N resources are also designed to support the upcoming Computer Science Programming merit badge. Starting in October, you'll be able to use the CS2N infrastructure to develop your own themed storytelling and animation or Web development activities.

CS2N also supports our merit badge counselors by offering classes on an as-needed basis using WebEx distance learning technology. If you are interested in participating in a class, please send them a note:

<http://www.cs2n.org/support/contact>

How to complete Scouting Heritage MB Requirement 4B



If you have a Scout working on Scouting Heritage merit badge Requirement 4, Joe Connole's your guy. The programs coordinator and lead admissions clerk for the BSA's National Scouting Museum in Irving, Tex., is in charge of answering letters and emails from Scouts working on that merit badge.

A Scout has three options for completing Requirement 4 of Scouting Heritage MB, each involving keeping a journal or writing a report:

- A. Attend a BSA national jamboree, world Scout jamboree OR a national BSA high-adventure base.
- B. Write or visit the National Scouting Museum in Irving, Tex.
- C. Visit an exhibit of Scouting memorabilia or a local museum with a Scouting history gallery or visit with someone in your council who is recognized as a dedicated Scouting historian or memorabilia collector.

Scouts who choose to write the National Scouting Museum (4B), will need to contact Joe. If they do, they'll get a response with a letter, a brochure, the awesome free patch seen to the left. To help Scouts taking this merit badge and counselors teaching it, Joe shared some details on how it works:

First, write a letter or email to the museum. Scouts must either write (email or regular mail) or visit the National Scouting Museum and obtain information about the facility. Scouts will receive a letter, fact sheet, brochure and the patch seen here. The patch is the only way a counselor can verify that the Scout has actually written or visited the Museum.

They can contact Joe either by email (joseph.connole@scouting.org) or mail at:

Joe Connole
1329 W Walnut Hill Ln.
Irving, TX 75038

Scouts must include the following information: first and last name, current Scout rank and their mailing address. Information will not be sent to counselors or Scoutmasters, only to Scouts working on the merit badge.

If a troop is working on the merit badge, they can write a single letter as long as each Scout signs and writes his name showing that he worked on the letter.

Parents or leaders should verify that the Scout's information appears legible and is accurate; Joe receives a number of letters every year where the Scout's information isn't legible or is inaccurate.

Then, wait for a response. Mailings are done every Wednesday; Scouts should allow at least three weeks for a response. Joe receives more than 1,000 letters every year (last year that accounted for 28 percent of all Scouts who earned this MB), and while he strives to send information within three weeks, there are times when that is not possible.

As for the other requirements, Joe strongly suggests that Scouts get the merit badge book as well as the reprint of the first-edition Boy Scout Handbook to complete Requirement 7.

Counselors should notice that Requirement 8 doesn't say that they must talk to a man over the age of 40 who was a Boy Scout. It says to speak to someone over the age of 40 who was a Scout.

While Joe won't send information to Scout leaders or counselors, he does have a PowerPoint presentation that covers Requirements 1 to 3 that he's happy to share.

Top 10 Life Skills Merit Badges



To reach the Eagle rank, each Scout needs to earn the Eagle required merit badge set. After that, it's up to him to choose merit badges that interest him. All too often, the badges are done because they are being offered at troop meetings, or at summer camp, or a merit badge fair, rather than because they sound interesting to the Scout. It's better for the Scout to review the topics and choose those he wants.

If we could recommend merit badges with the most useful skills that will most likely help the Scout as he leaves home, lives on his own, and starts a family, this would be our list:

- **Astronomy** - gets the Scout in touch with his universe. A little knowledge of constellations, planets, moon, and sun helps with seasons, time, and direction.
- **Automotive Maintenance** - knowing more than where to stick the gas pump nozzle and the key can save hundreds of dollars and keep a car running many more years. The Scout might also recognize and troubleshoot roadside problems.
- **Electricity** - with electric power in every home, understanding how it works and what might go wrong is good stuff.
- **Genealogy** - as a young person goes out on their own, a strong tie to family provides support. By recognizing your place in your family's history, and being aware of that history, a sense of belonging helps when loneliness sets in.
- **Home Repairs** - this one is obvious! No Scout should ever need to call on a Handyman service to make small repairs around his home or apartment.
- **Pets** - provides practice in caring for helpless beings that rely completely on you for life. Many Scouts will have pets when they are adults, and it's good practice for kids as well.
- **Plumbing** - have you seen the price of plumbing repairs? Everyone will have broken pipes, replaced hot water heater, or leaking faucets, sinks, or toilets at some point. This also gets the Scout more aware of how a house works.
- **Sustainability** - Yes, it's an optional Eagle-required badge but, if the Scout does Environmental Science, he should do this one as well. Energy conservation and sustainable practices will only continue to become more important and more commonplace. An awareness of ways to reduce, reuse, recycle, and sustain the planet is expected of everyone.
- **Traffic Safety** - Too many youth still die in vehicles. Since most Scouts drive, there's no reason they shouldn't complete this badge. It's yet another review of being a safe driver, and every review helps.
- **Weather** - Awareness of developing weather can be a life-saving skill as well as protecting property from damage.

Merit Badge Pamphlets and Leader Materials Now Available On Kindle



Imagine being able to look up rank or merit badge requirements on your phone or tablet wherever you are. Or giving your Scouts access to merit badge pamphlets on devices from which they're already inseparable. That's the promise of the Boy Scouts of America's Amazon Kindle library, which debuted in April and has been adding titles at a fervid pace ever since.

You can download, search and read selected merit badge pamphlets, leader materials and the BSA Fieldbook on Kindle devices or via the Kindle app on phones and tablets.

Pretty much every phone and tablet, including iPhones, iPads, Android devices, Windows Phones and — duh — Kindles have a Kindle reader that lets you access your Kindle books. In other words, you can read them even if you don't own an actual Kindle. The best part: If you buy a book once, you can view it on any of your devices. The apps will remember your bookmarks, highlights and where you stopped reading. Say you bought the Fieldbook on your Kindle Fire but didn't bring that device on your troop campout. The app lets you read it on your iPhone without buying the book again.

What's available now?

All of the Eagle-required merit badges, with the exception of Citizenship in the World and Sustainability, are available now. Also available are two tech-heavy merit badges: Robotics and Digital Technology. How appropriate. Leaders will be pleased with a selection of materials for them. No more lugging around heavy books. Just download and go.

MB Pamphlets (\$4.99)

- Camping
- Citizenship in the Community
- Citizenship in the Nation
- Communication
- Cooking
- Cycling
- Digital Technology
- Emergency Preparedness
- Environmental Science
- Family Life
- First Aid
- Hiking
- Lifesaving
- Personal Management
- Personal Fitness
- Robotics
- Swimming

Leader materials

- Cub Scouts Leader Book (\$8.99)
- Guide to Safe Scouting (\$5.99)
- 2014 Boy Scout Requirements (\$5.99)
- Troop Committee Guidebook (\$6.99)
- Administration of Commissioner Service (\$9.99)
- Cub Scouts Leader How To Book (\$8.99)
- The Scoutmaster Handbook (\$9.99)

Other must-have Scouting materials

- Fieldbook: Scouting's Manual of Basic and Advanced Skills for Outdoor Adventure (\$19.99)

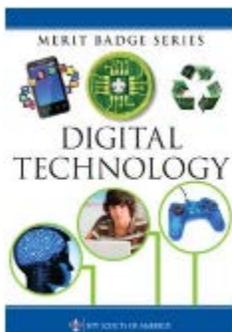
Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Merit Badge Sashes



A merit badge sash is like a trophy case you can wear. Each tiny circle represents one of the 136 interest areas a Boy Scout has conquered. But what restrictions are placed on merit badge sashes? In what order should they be sewn on? Is there a minimum or maximum number of merit badges a Scout may wear on a sash? Can a Scout with a ton of merit badges wear two sashes? What about wearing a sash folded over a belt? According to the BSA's *Guide to Awards and Insignia* (the official source for everything about awards and uniforms):

- You're limited to a "maximum of three per row as shown, no limit." You couldn't fit more than three in a row anyway. As for the badges' order on the sash, there's nothing specified. Most Scouts will simply add them as they earn them. Others like to separate the Eagle-required ones (those with a silver border) in some way.
- While you may come across a Scout wearing two merit badge sashes in a crisscross pattern, that's not permitted. Boy Scouts may wear only one merit badge sash at a time.
- Essentially, there's no official maximum number of merit badges a Boy Scout may wear, unless he has more merit badges than will fit three across on the front and back of the sash.
- There's only one right place for a merit badge sash: over the right shoulder. It can be worn over or under the epaulet (shoulder loop).
- A merit badge sash is never worn on the belt.
- Merit badge sashes are worn only by Boy Scouts and Venturers who are earning Boy Scout advancement. Varsity Scouts may wear the merit badge sash, too, of course.
- Patches that aren't merit badges, including camporee or event patches, may be worn on the sash, but only on the back.
- This one's pretty clear: "The merit badge sash and the Order of the Arrow sash may not be worn at the same time."

Teaching the New Digital Technology Merit Badge

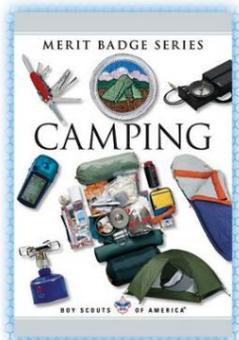


At first blush, you might think today's Scouts would need a technology merit badge as much as a merit badge for eating. After all, they're digital natives who can't remember a time without laptops, smartphones and GPS devices.

Yet the new Digital Technology merit badge does more than teach Scouts something they already know or give them credit for what they've already done. Instead, the badge — which replaced the Computers merit badge at the end of 2014 — adds context to the technology they use every day and helps them become safe and smart users of all sorts of digital devices.

To learn more about the Digital Technology merit badge and how you can teach it effectively (or finding people to be a counselor for it), check out this *Scouting* magazine article: <http://scoutingmagazine.org/2015/01/teaching-the-new-digital-technology-merit-badge/>

All Eagle Required Merit Badges Now Available as Interactive Pamphlets



For the first time ever, it's now possible for a Scout to earn every Eagle-required merit badge using the new interactive digital merit badge pamphlets. That includes those badges that allow Scouts to choose from two or three options. For example, to become an Eagle Scout, a young man must earn the Swimming or Hiking or Cycling merit badges. But whichever he chooses, he'll have the interactive digital merit badge pamphlet available for download right now. Same for the Emergency Preparedness and Lifesaving merit badges and the Environmental Science and Sustainability merit badges.

That's 17 Eagle-required and three elective merit badges that are now digital. The electives are three logical candidates for "early digitization": Animation, Digital Technology and Robotics.

So why go interactive digital instead of the ink-and-paper merit badge pamphlet?

- Exclusive videos, including how-to clips, career bios, virtual tours and multimedia experiences
- Search, so you can find what you need quickly
- Simulations, animations, photo slideshows and graphics
- Interactive Q&A's

Like all things digital, these don't take up any extra space in your backpack. And you get it all for the same cost as the print pamphlets: \$4.99.

Is this the same as what's on Amazon? No. These interactive digital merit badge pamphlets aren't the same as the digital merit badge pamphlets sold on Amazon.com. The big difference? Interactivity.

The ones on Amazon are searchable and available on any device with a Kindle app, but they don't include the BSA's custom-designed interactive elements. The interactive digital merit badge pamphlets, on the other hand, are available on iPad, iPhone, Android and Web browsers and include all of the BSA's resources for that merit badge.

Merit Badge iPhone App



Beginning in early 2011, Boy Scouts will be able to manage their merit badges with an interactive application for the Apple iPhone. The application which will be available for \$1.99 through the iTunes Store, will let Scouts review merit badge requirements and keep track of their progress by requirement.

The app's home screen shows the total number of badges the Scout has completed and started. With a few taps, he can check the requirements for any badge, find links to related websites and resources, and record the requirements he has completed. He can also post his results to Facebook.

If a Scout has already purchased The Boy Scout Handbook – Boy Scouts of America app, which appeared in 2009, it will automatically be imported into the new app. The handbook app is also available for purchase through the merit badge app for \$7.99.

Disclaimer: This article is provided for informational purposes only and does not imply endorsement by the Boy Scouts of America.

BSA Discourages Use of Merit Badge Worksheets



Merit badges aren't easy to earn. They're meant to challenge the mind, to build character, and to educate through trial and error.

Merit badge worksheets hasten this process — but not always in a good way. These printable documents are meant to help Scouts complete requirements by filling in the blanks. Sure, they can be time-saving tools, but too often they're used in the wrong way.

That's why the Boy Scouts of America discourages — but doesn't ban — the use of these worksheets, which are available online.

What does that mean? Look for requirements with verbs like “discuss,” “show,” “tell,” “explain,” “demonstrate” or “identify.” Requirements like those aren't meant to be completed by filling in a blank on some worksheet, says Chris Hunt, team leader of the BSA's Content Management Team.

Merit badge worksheets are “permitted only for fulfilling requirements where something is to be done in writing,” he says. And merit badge counselors may never require the use of merit badge worksheets and may, if they choose, refuse to accept them, Hunt says.

This has been a rule in the *Guide to Advancement* for a couple of years.

For more on this topic see the following article:

<http://blog.scoutingmagazine.org/2015/01/13/merit-badge-worksheets/>

Six Eagle-Required Merit Badge Pamphlets Now Available in Spanish



For the first time in BSA history, merit badge pamphlets are available in Spanish.

The first wave includes six Eagle-required merit badges. You can add these six pamphlets to the *Boy Scout Handbook* and other BSA publications that have Spanish-language editions. That's big news as the BSA continues its efforts to bring Scouting to Hispanic markets.

What are the six merit badges with Spanish editions available now?

- Campamento (Camping), No. 619133, www.scoutstuff.org/mbp-4c-camping-sp.html
- Civismo Comunitario (Citizenship in the Community), No. 619134, www.scoutstuff.org/mbp-4c-cit-n-community-sp.html
- Comunicación (Communication), No. 619137, www.scoutstuff.org/mbp-4c-communication-sp.html
- Vida en Familia (Family Life), No. 619142, www.scoutstuff.org/mbp-4c-family-life-sp.html
- Excursionismo (Hiking), No. 619144, www.scoutstuff.org/mbp-4c-hiking-sp.html
- Bienestar Personal (Personal Fitness), No. 619146, www.scoutstuff.org/mbp-4c-personal-fitnss-sp.html

The pamphlets are \$4.99 — same as their English counterparts and are available from ScoutStuff.org.

Merit Badge Counselors: Facts about Limits and Counseling Family Members



All answers are from the *2013 Guide to Advancement*

Is there a limit to the number of merit badges an individual may counsel?

Answer: The National Council places no limit on the number of merit badges an individual may be approved to counsel, except to the extent a person lacks skills and education in a given subject. The intent is for Scouts to learn from those with an appropriate level of expertise.

Although it is permissible for councils to limit the number of badges that one person counsels, it must not do so to the point where Scouts' choices, especially in small or remote units, are so limited as to serve as a barrier to advancement.

Is there a limit to the number of merit badges a Scout may earn from a single counselor?

Answer: (continued from previous answer) Neither does the National Council place a limit on the number of merit badges a youth may earn from one counselor.

However, in situations where a Scout is earning a large number of badges from just one counselor, the unit leader is permitted to place a limit on the number of merit badges that may be earned from one counselor, as long as the same limit applies to all Scouts in the unit.

Can someone counsel his or her own family member?

Answer: Approved counselors may work with and pass any member, including their own son, ward, or relative.

Nevertheless, we often teach young people the importance of broadening horizons. Scouts meeting with counselors beyond their families and beyond even their own units are doing that. They will benefit from the perspectives of many "teachers" and will learn more as a result. They should be encouraged to reach out.

Personal Fitness MB, 12 Week Requirement



From Ask Andy, <http://netcommissioner.com/askandy/2016/03/issue-476-march-1-2016/>

Hi Andy,

I'm a Merit Badge Counselor for Personal Fitness. A Scout started the 12-week physical fitness requirement, but stopped after five weeks due to school. He'd now like to start from "week 6." I interpret this requirement to mean that the 12 weeks must be consecutive. Can he start today at "week 6," or does he need to re-start from "week 1"?

Although that requirement doesn't specifically state that the 12 weeks must be continuous, I'd certainly personally agree with your interpretation.

(As a counselor for Swimming, I'm luckier than you! Both Swimming requirements 2 and 3 specifically state that the 100 yards and 150 yards, respectively, must be continuous.)

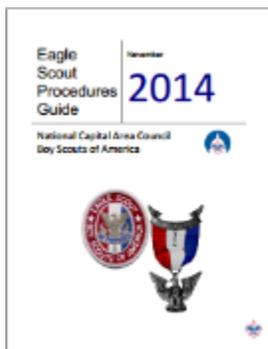
Let's take your Scout's situation to the absurd, to see if it holds water... What if a Scout chose to do one week "on" and then two weeks "off," and so on...? What sort of progress is he likely to make? The purpose of the 12 weeks is to concentrate on improving and then enjoy and appreciate the results.

In your shoes, I think I'd tell the Scout that of course he can re-start, but he's re-starting at "day one" of week 1.

As for "school got in the way," let's also remember that the program he creates for himself (with your and his parents' approval) is supposed to account for "hiccups" along the way...like "school." In other words, part of the "hidden learning" here is "stick-to-itiveness"!

Eagle Scout

Updated NCAC Eagle Scout Procedures Guide (ESPG)



As you have heard/known before, the NCAC has a lengthy document known as the *Eagle Scout Procedures Guide* (ESPG). The ESGP has been around for quite some time, but was significantly revamped after National released the initial *Guide to Advancement* (GTA) in 2011. Its purpose however has not changed; to clarify how our Council **implements** the guidelines specific to the Life-to-Eagle process.

BSA National took a particular interest in our document and suggested some recommended changes to the document. The October 2014 update to the ESGP has now been published and is available at ...

http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.ncacbsa.org/resource/group/dabf2b2b-f7f6-48ee-a27c-9cc7e1a94a55/Documents/Eagle_Scout_Procedures_Guide.pdf.

Please recall, that while available to anyone and loaded with very helpful information for the Eagle candidate himself the ESGP is primarily targeted for/to Life-to-Eagle coordinators (district & unit) and the unit-level leaders mentoring the Eagle Candidates. By having those people properly familiar with the ESGP and how it implements National's guidelines relative to the Life-to-Eagle process, better counsel can be provided to the boys themselves.

Navigating the Eagle Scout Service Project Information for Project Beneficiaries



The B.S.A. has published a helpful guide – *Navigating the Eagle Scout Service Project Information for Project Beneficiaries* (www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/510-025.pdf) – that defines the way an Eagle Project works from the perspective of the benefiting organization.

Key elements of the process are explained:

- The Eagle Scout Rank and the Service Project
- Typical Projects
- Project Restrictions and Limitations
- Approving the Project Proposal and Project Scheduling
- Approving Final Plans
- Permits, Permissions, and Authorizations
- Supervision
- Project Completion and Approval

Much needless confusion and difficulty over the Eagle project can be avoided if everyone involved takes the time to read and understand resources about the whole process of proposing, approving and reviewing an Eagle project.

If you are a Life Scout about to embark on your Eagle Scout Service Project (ESSP), you may have noticed that the new (May 2014) version of the ESSP workbook actually includes this 'Navigating' document at the very end of the file, as the last two pages of the workbook. Make sure to provide it to your beneficiary representative, since his/her signature block on your Proposal includes a check-mark where they acknowledge receipt of that document.

Online Resource – EagleScout.org



www.EagleScout.org is a site dedicated to helping Scouts become Eagle Scouts!

They've collected a lot of resources to assist Scouts in achieving Eagle Scout rank and planning the celebration to follow - everything from Eagle planning guides to extensive court of honor materials. Whether you are a Boy Scout looking for practical resources for yourself, a parent who is supporting (or motivating) your very own Eagle Scout candidate, or a Scouter helping one boy or assisting hundreds, you'll find tools that will empower you and help you do your best!

When Can a Scout Start His Eagle Project



Dear Andy,

Can a Life Scout start his Eagle project before he has the other requirements (including merit badges) completed?

Great question—thanks for asking! A Life Scout can begin earnest work toward his project the very morning after his Life board of review! (There's a general misconception "out there" that all merit badges, etc., have to be completed first, and that's just what it is: a misconception!) Further, while as a Star or even First Class Scout he can certainly start thinking about what he might want to do, including having conversations with potential beneficiaries and reading the project workbook and instructions...but actual "roll up your sleeves" or "sharpen your pencil" (or polish your PC keyboard) doesn't begin till he's Life.

Filling In and Signing the Eagle Scout Rank Application



Filling in and getting the Eagle Scout Rank Application (ESRA) signed is the last step a Scout has to do before his Eagle Board of Review, and it's the one with the most mistakes made. Below are items to be aware of, those preceded by an asterisk are required items, everything else is a recommended practice.

Filling in the ESRA

1. *The 2016 version of the ESRA is the only one being accepted by Council, it can be found at: www.ncacbsa.org/advancement/eagle-scout-information/ (Note: units should use the link to the official version on their site, not a copy of the ESRA. This way the link will always point to the latest version).
2. Fill the form out electronically. It's easier to read and will prevent it from being rejected if a date cannot be read. It will also make revisions easier.
3. List elective merit badges in chronological order.
4. *End date of the position of responsibility cannot be a future date, like the next troop election. It also cannot end on or after the Scout's 18th birthday.
5. *The troop's advancement person should verify that all of the dates match the information in the Internet Advancement (IA) Member Summary. All discrepancies must be resolved and IA updated.
6. *All information on the ESRA must agree with the data reported on IA.
7. *The Scout's signature signifies that all information is correct **at that moment**. The only dates that can be after the date the Scout signs the ESRA are the unit leader and the committee chair signatures. So the end date of the position of responsibility should not be after the date the Scout signs the application.
8. You can find a checklist for verifying the ESRA at: www.ncacbsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/NCAC_Eagle_Scout_Verification.pdf

Signing the ESRA

1. *After the Scout signs the ESRA the unit leader and the committee chairman sign. These signatures means that these leaders concur with the validity of the data and the Scout's 'approved readiness' for an Eagle Board of Review.
2. The dates accompanying these signatures may be after the Scout's 18th birthday. If a Unit Leader and/or Unit Committee Chairperson refuse to sign the application, the Scout should be directed to contact the District Advancement Chairperson for guidance.

Verifying the ESRA

1. *Once the unit committee chair has signed the application, the application and the Internet Advancement Member Summary is provided by the Scout to a District Eagle Representative for review. The District Eagle Representative is required to review the application and verify the advancement guidelines of the Boy Scouts of America are met, or request an explanation if there is any discrepancy.
2. Additional revisions may be required to reconcile any issues that were not caught at the Unit level.
3. Once the District Eagle Representative has initialed the ESRA, it may be sent in to Council for it's approval. The document with the checklist (listed above) provides the methods to do this.

Reminders for Eagle Scout Rank Applications

Margee Egan – NCAC’s primary reviewer of Eagle Scout Rank Applications (ESRA) – has offered a few tidbit reminders to us; based on things she continues to see ‘wrong’ with ESRAs she gets from across the Council.

- a) Units should check all dates on the ESRA, and compare them to the records in ScoutNet by printing a "Scout record" and ensuring that all dates match.
 1. Frequently, ScoutNet reflects the Court of Honor date – vice the Board of Review date or date on the Merit Badge blue card.
 2. Rank Advancements must reflect the Board of Review date.
 3. And for Merit Badges, the blue card date must be honored. (Think “Blue must Rule”).
- b) On the ESRA, please list all elective merit badges in chronological order
- c) Date Joined Scouting: A boy becomes a Boy Scout the day his parents sign the youth application; not the day he earns his “Scout” patch (which is not a rank, since there is no Board of Review).
- d) In completing Eagle Scout Rank Applications (ESRA), units should compare all dates on the ESRA to the records in ScoutNet by printing a "Scout record" and ensuring that all dates match. Recall, for Merit Badges, “Blue Cards Rule”. If ScoutNet has dates that differ from those that appear on the Blue Cards, ScoutNet must be updated using Internet Advancement (IA).

You may notice that the new 2013 Eagle Scout Rank Application (ESRA) contains a third page. This update did not change the content of the first two pages of the 2013 version of the ESRA (except for the NESA note at the bottom of page 2). The National Eagle Scout Association (NESA) wanted a way to maintain contact with new Eagle Scouts and this appeared to be the best way to start the process.

- Don’t worry, the third page does not affect the processing of the ESRA and applications currently in processing do ***NOT*** need to be updated from the original 2013 version to this one!
- In fact, this third page is **OPTIONAL** – completed at the discretion of the Eagle Scout Candidates (and/or his parents). As such, the third page must **not** be sent with the ESRA for certification.

It must also **not** be included in the Eagle Scout Package. It is a voluntary form provided by NESA and should be sent directly to NESA, by the Scout’s family.

Starting the Eagle Application the Day After the Life Board of Review



A suggestion from Council, from the person who validates all of the Eagle Scout Rank Applications (ESRA), is that as soon as a Scout passes the Life Board of Review that he be congratulated and then handed an ESRA to start filling out. While a lot of the information is still unknown have him fill in as much as possible and return it to the unit advancement process to perform a records audit.

As he earns more merit badges they can be added to the ESRA (please place all elective badges in chronological order). By the time he is ready for the Eagle Board of Review his application will be complete, and more importantly, accurate.

Eagles' Call, the Official Magazine for Eagle Scouts, Now Available for Anyone



Now you don't have to be an Eagle Scout to read about the cool things Eagle Scouts are doing. For the first time ever, *Eagles' Call*, the quarterly magazine from the National Eagle Scout Association, is available to anyone, not just those who have earned Scouting's highest honor.

All active NESA members automatically receive *Eagles' Call* magazine as a perk of membership. That's not changing. What's new is that non-Eagles can subscribe at a price of \$10 a year (four issues).

Mike Goldman, editorial director for *Eagles' Call* (as well as *Boys' Life* and *Scouting* magazines), was instrumental in the move to open *Eagles' Call* to everyone.

"We like to think of *Eagles' Call* as an aspirational tool, a magazine that can help strengthen the values of the BSA and instill a greater sense of purpose to, for example, Life Scouts and their parents," he says. "If by opening up *Eagles' Call* to new subscribers we help one boy attain the Eagle rank, then we have done our job."

Date Became a Boy Scout on Eagle Application

One of the first fields to fill in on the Eagle Scout Rank Application, and the hardest to remember, is the date the Scout became a Boy Scout. This is the date that the parent signed the application to join the troop, not the day they got the Scout badge. Some troop membership/advancement chairs keep the application on file for as long as the Scout is a member of the unit.

The date found in ScoutNet for this is rarely correct because that is the date the registrar posts the membership which is often days, weeks, or months after the parent signed the application.

Why is this date important? Because anything the Scout earned before the reported date, and yes Scouts can earn merit badges as soon as they join and before they get their Scout badge, is considered invalid.

Gathering of Eagles



Gathering of Eagles (GOE) is the Eagle alumni organization for the National Capital Area Council. Our aims are simple:

- Encourage networking and friendship among Eagle Scouts.
- Assist the National Capital Area Council with Eagle-related activities.
- Gather and re-engage Eagles who have not recently been involved with Scouting.
- Leverage the skills, talents, and dedication of local Eagles to create lasting community service.
- Establish a foundation of continued financial support for Scouting.

In addition, GOE is NCAC's official National Eagle Scout Association (NESA) local committee. To register go to www.ncacbsa.org/?page=GOERegister

Life to Eagle Process Reminders



The following bullets are offered as reminders to things that should (or should not) be done ... culled from conversations had and observations made over the last few weeks of serving the district's Eagle Candidates and their units.

Eagle Scout Service Project Hours ... Please remind your boys who are working on their Eagle Scout Service Project that the hours they report in their Workbook – as well as on the back of the Eagle Scout Rank Application – are supposed to include their own time planning and preparing for the actual “project day”. This would include time spent with the benefiting organization, gathering approvals from their unit and the district rep, and trips to stores gathering necessary materials – even filling out the workbook. Don't short-change yourself!

Letters of Character Reference for Eagle Board of Review ... Please remember that the only people who should ever see the contents of the Letters of Character Reference for an Eagle Board of Review are those who are actually sitting on the Board. Ideally, the envelopes would be opened for the first time at the Board, however that can't always be done; such as when the letter was sent via email. (And immediately after the Board of Review, they should be shredded.)

Uniforms at the Eagle Board of Review ... Per the Guide to Advancement, please remember that the Board of Review “shall become neither a retest or ‘examination’ nor challenge of (a Scout's) knowledge”. Similarly, “it is preferred a Scout be in full field uniform for any board of review”, and should wear as much of it as he owns”, however, the only requirement is that he “be clean and neat in his appearance and dressed appropriately. Regardless of unit expectations or rules, boards of review may not reject candidates dressed to this description.” Thus uniform ‘inspections’ at the beginning of a Board of Review are not in keeping with the spirit of the GTA.

Form Signatures at the Eagle Board of Review ... The district representative at the Eagle Board of Review is actually there on behalf of the Council. Thus, it is actually his/her signature that belongs anywhere a ‘Council’ signature is called for. This applies to both the Eagle Scout Rank Application and the Rank Advancement Form.

Read This Sample Dialogue with a Life Scout about Eagle Project Ideas



For many young men, the Eagle Scout Service Project is the toughest part of the journey to Eagle. And the first hurdle of this process is coming up with an idea.

This is when a Scoutmaster, assistant Scoutmaster or Eagle coordinator is asked: “What's a good Eagle project?”

Marc Dworkin wants to help you. Dworkin is, among other Scouting roles, Eagle coordinator for a troop in New Jersey. He's written a sample dialogue between himself and a Life Scout looking for Eagle project ideas:

<http://blog.scoutingmagazine.org/2014/12/12/read-sample-dialogue-life-scout-eagle-project-ideas/>

As Dworkin proves, this is more than just a 15-second conversation. And the best Scouters do more than simply send the Scout to search for ideas on Google.

Crowdfunding an Eagle Project



The National Council allows “crowdfunding” for Eagle projects. But those that plan to use it should be aware of the following:

- If the amount to be raised is \$500 or more than a fundraising application is required by NCAC.
- Eagle projects may not comply with the website's terms of service.
- If a contract is required, it must be signed by someone over 18 years of age.
- The website may take a percentage of the funds raised.
- Funds must be raised in the name of the beneficiary, not BSA.

The website must allow excess funds to go to the project beneficiary or the beneficiary's designee.

Crowdfunding and Eagle Projects



Eagle Scout service projects completed with minimal or no expense are always preferred to those with high price tags. In other words: An Eagle project doesn't need to cost a fortune to be meaningful.

But the BSA knows that low-cost Eagle projects aren't always possible or preferred by Scouts, meaning sometimes Scouts need to earn money for materials, equipment rentals, or even professional services.

Some Scouts approach friends, family members, and businesses for this money. Others try car washes, bake sales or spaghetti dinners. But given the rise of crowdfunding websites, some Scouts may wonder whether online fundraising is an acceptable option.

The answer is yes. There are hundreds of crowdfunding sites out there, and the BSA won't endorse one over another. It's best for Eagle Scout hopefuls to do their homework on these sites. They'll want to know how much of a cut the site takes, whether they'll get the money even if they don't reach the stated goal and whether the site allows fundraising for projects benefiting non-profits like the BSA.

As anyone who has sought crowdfunding for a movie, book or gadget knows, just because you ask for money doesn't mean you'll get it. Scouts should have a plan B in case the online funding route doesn't succeed.

Remember: Anytime money is raised for an Eagle project from sources other than the Scout's family, his unit, or the project beneficiary, an Eagle Scout Service Project Fundraising Application is required. That form is in the Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook, available at www.scouting.org/scoutsource/BoyScouts/AdvancementandAwards/resources.aspx.

Crowdfunding sites work well for project-based fundraising but are not the right approach for general unit fundraising. In other words, you shouldn't use these sites to fill your unit's coffers as a substitute for traditional unit money-earning projects.

This article was copied from the Sept-Oct *Scouter* magazine.

When Should Youth and Adults Wear the Eagle Scout Medal?



Three things signify to others that you're an Eagle Scout. You've got the oval rank patch, which is only for youth; the square knot, which is only for adults; and the Eagle medal, which is for ... whom exactly?

The following questions were addressed to Peter Self, team leader for Member Experience Innovation, to answer.

Question 1: When is it appropriate for youth members to wear the Eagle Scout medal? On the uniform at any time? On formal occasions only?

Answer 1: The overarching guideline to all awards, including the Eagle rank, is to keep the uniform neat and uncluttered. This doesn't mean we shouldn't display those awards and recognitions we have earned, but we shouldn't wear more than is appropriate for our position or the occasion.

In most instances, the Eagle patch and the medal should not be worn at the same time; however, on special occasions, such as courts of honor or special banquets, it would be considered appropriate.

We couldn't possibly address every circumstance that would arise (honoring a beloved Scoutmaster at his/her memorial service, attending the BSA's annual Report to the Nation, etc.), so we leave this up to the discretion of the Scout.

If he does choose to wear the medal, he should wear it above the left pocket flap of the uniform.

Question 2: When is it appropriate for adult Eagle Scouts to wear the medal? With their field uniform? With a business suit?

Answer 2: Adults who have earned the Eagle rank should wear the red, white and blue square knot (item No. 5011), which represents the Eagle rank, when in official Scout uniform.

While it is not specifically addressed in official BSA literature, as a matter of convention it is also acceptable for adults to wear the medal on special occasions, such as those noted above. That means either on the field uniform or, if the adult is wearing business attire, on the left lapel or above the left breast pocket of a business suit or sports coat.

Council Notes About Submitting Eagle Applications



The following are some notes we have received about submitting an Eagle Scout Rank Application (ESRA) to council for review and final approval:

1. The only thing that needs to be emailed to council for the records verification prior to the board of review is the ESRA. No statement of life purpose, no workbook, no Individual History Report from Troopmaster, no Member Summary Report from Internet Advancement (they already have that in their system), just the ESRA.
2. Only one unit 'type' should be listed on page one.
3. Encourage professionalism in filling out the forms, encourage the use of the fillable/savable ESRA. Notebooks should be organized and neatly assembled. Name on the Statement of Life Purpose (they sometimes get separated from the rest of the paperwork). If this submission was a job or college application, would it wow the reviewer?
4. If a pen was used to fill out the ESRA and a correction needs to be made it must be legible, or re-written in the margin.

5 Tips for Helping Scouts Reach Eagle Before Time Runs Out



Some Life Scouts race against the clock to earn the Eagle Scout award before they turn 18, including a handful that complete their board of review on the eve of their 18th birthday. It doesn't have to be that way.

Dial down the drama of eleventh-hour Eagles with these five tips for helping Scouts reach Eagle with plenty of time to spare.

The ideas were adapted from Mark Ray's *Scouting* magazine article called "Game of Life to Eagle: Helping Scouts reach the finish line." Find more great ideas there: <http://scoutingmagazine.org/2014/04/game-life-eagle-helping-scouts-reach-finish-line/>

5. Set a target date.

Everyone needs a deadline. Encourage Scouts to set target dates for completing key requirements. For example: Have all Eagle-required merit badges completed by age 16. Have the Eagle Scout service project completed by age 17. An Eagle coach (known in some troops as a "Life-to-Eagle coordinator" or an "involved parent") can help the Scout come up with these dates.

Make sure the target dates are several months before the Scout turns 18.

4. Manage expectations.

Hope for the best but plan for the worst. Emphasize to Scouts that every step along the journey will take longer than they think.

Then if they finish the requirements early, everyone wins. (And everyone gets to eat cake at the court of honor even sooner!)

3. Take it one step at a time.

The journey to Eagle isn't easy. So it's best taken one step at a time. That's why you suggest that Scouts concentrate on merit badges first and then the service project (or vice versa), so they won't feel overwhelmed.

2. Finish the time-sensitive merit badges ASAP.

The Eagle-required Family Life, Personal Fitness and Personal Management merit badges have requirements that take several months. Urge Scouts to get those time-sensitive requirements out of the way early.

Those requirements can't be altered in any way, so a Life Scout starting on Family Life requirement 3 — "Prepare a list of your regular home duties or chores (at least five) and do them for 90 days" — two months before he turns 18 would not be able to earn the Eagle Scout award.

1. Remember your role.

A basketball coach encourages and guides his players from the sidelines, but he doesn't take the shots himself.

Similarly, encouragement along the journey to Eagle Scout is fine — and preferable to not paying attention at all.

But don't take the shots for them.

And never work harder than the Scouts you're working with. After all, they're the ones who get the Eagle Scout badge once all requirements are completed — not you.

Eagle Scout Project Showcase



Looking for Eagle Scout service project ideas? Look no further than *Boys' Life's* new Eagle Scout Project Showcase: <http://eagleprojects.boyslife.org/>

The site includes more than 101 Eagle Scout projects that visitors can browse by keyword, category and location. And you can submit your own project — or that of a Scout in your troop — to add it to the database.

That's the cool thing about this new resource from *Boys' Life* magazine: And it will only get better as more and more projects get added. Other features include:

- A searchable directory of projects: Know a Scout who wants to do a project at his church or at a historic site? Quickly find examples of those to get him started.
- A map of projects: Looking for projects near you?
- Tips for planning an Eagle project: Essential tips for Life Scouts.

A place to submit completed projects: Showing off is encouraged.

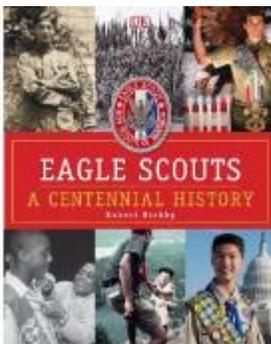
Online Resource – EagleCoach.org



www.EagleCoach.org provides coaching advice to Scouts seeking to become an Eagle Scout, tips, a movie list for the Citizenship in the Community requirement, and even some words to parents dealing with procrastinating Scouts. It is constantly updated to reflect the most current requirements from the Boy Scouts of America.

The site is managed by David G. Hunt who serves as a Vice President of Suffolk County Council, Boy Scouts of America (Long Island, NY.). He is also a member of the Executive Board, and has been an Eagle Scout Coach and merit badge counselor for many years.

Book – Inspiration Illustrated

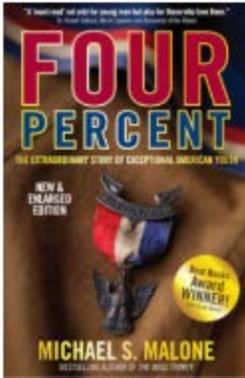


More than two million Scouts have earned the rank of Eagle Scout since Arthur Eldred became the first Eagle in 1912. Now, in *Eagle Scouts: A Centennial History*, author Robert Birkby tells the stories of many of these Scouts, showing how the leadership lessons and skills acquired from the Eagle program led them to future accomplishments.

This inspiring book (\$20; available Sept. 28 from Amazon) comes illustrated with a wide range of photographs and art works, including many historic Eagle medals and insignia.

As a special addition (\$15), you can order a custom book jacket at www.ScoutStuff.org that will allow you to replace the six images on the cover with six images of your own.

Book – Second Edition of ‘Four Percent’ Book



The roster of men who have earned the Eagle Scout award includes a U.S. president, dozens of astronauts, several Medal of Honor recipients, Nobel-prize-winning scientists — plus countless authors, movie stars, titans of industry, senators, congressmen, governors, civil rights leaders and community activists.

In short, the kind of men who belong in a book.

That’s the appeal of *Four Percent: The Extraordinary Story of Exceptional American Youth*. Its new and expanded second edition — filled with even more vivid historical anecdotes, compelling profiles and surprising facts — is now available through ScoutStuff.org (<http://www.scoutstuff.org/book-four-percent-2nd-ed.html>)

Michael S. Malone and David C. Scott released the expanded second edition of the award-winning *Four Percent* at a breakfast celebrating Eagle Scouts at May’s National Annual Meeting in Atlanta.

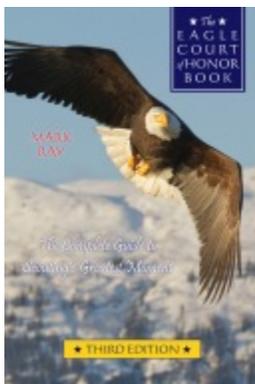
The content and images in the book have been enhanced, and information on the Adams Service Project scholarship has been updated.

For now, the \$28 book is only available through the BSA’s Scout Shops and at ScoutStuff.org. It will go into wide release later this year.

The book is a terrific read for Eagle Scouts and those who are impressed by them. It also makes a great — and popular — gift for a young man’s Eagle Scout court of honor.

Eagle Scout Court of Honor

Book – The Eagle Court of Honor Book



To turn a run-of-the-mill Eagle Scout Court of Honor into something unforgettable, toss out the carbon-copy script your troop has used for years. Instead, pick up a copy of *The Eagle Court of Honor Book* (\$14.99 at www.ScoutStuff.org).

The book, in its third edition, includes complete ceremonies, planning checklists, inspirational pieces, Eagle Scout charges, poems, quotes, and more.

But if you’ve ever been to an Eagle Scout Court of Honor, you know that the ceremony is just part of the experience. You’ve also got to deal with all of the before and after details — the source of headaches for many an Eagle Scout mom or dad. We’re talking about all the lists of whom to invite, tips for planning the perfect reception, ideas for making your own props, and suggestions for meaningful gifts for the newly minted Eagle.

So get advice on all of that from a trusted source: author Mark Ray, a frequent contributor to *Scouting* magazine and other official BSA publications. Mark has participated in the program at every level during a career that’s stretched over more than 25 years. You may know Mark’s other popular publication, *The Scoutmaster’s Other Handbook*.

Eagle Recognition Letters from the Military



If you want your new Eagle Scouts to receive recognition letters from one of the military services, follow these directions:

Army – for the U.S. Army Youth Certificate of Recognition, signed by the Army's Chief of Staff, nominations must be sent to a local U.S. Army recruiting battalion or applied for online at www.GoArmy.com/ycr/

Navy – for a U.S. Navy Eagle Scout Recognition Certificate, send requests to the commanding officer of the local navy Recruiting District. District locations are available at www.NavyCS.com/districts.html or by calling the nearest navy recruiter. Requests should include the new Eagle Scout's name (as it will appear on the certificate), date of the award ceremony, mailing address to send the certificate, and information for contacting the troop leader.

Air Force – Requests for an Eagle Scout congratulatory letter from the U.S. Air Force should be sent of AFRS/PA, Attn: Scout Letters, 550 D Street West, Suite 1, Randolph AFB, TX 78150-4527.

Marines – Send your request, in writing, to Commandant of the Marine Corps, Director of Marine Corps Staff, The Pentagon, Rm. 4E791, Washington, D.C. 20350-3000.

Unsung Heroes No More: Watch Eagle Scout Moms Get Their Due



Aren't Scout moms the greatest? Every den meeting led, patch sewed, ride provided, skinned knee doctored, smelly shirt washed, campout attended and advice dished out reinforces the point that Scouting wouldn't exist without them.

And few of the boys who make it to the Eagle Scout rank do so without a mom or motherly figure in their lives. I know I never would've earned Eagle without mine.

So isn't it time we gave Eagle Scout moms a proper thanks?

That's what the creators of the LDS church's "A Century of Honor" celebration in Salt Lake City must have thought when they wrote "Ma, You Earned Your Eagle," a song that celebrates the "ever-faithful mom"

As the name implies, the song acknowledges that although the young man wears the badge and medal, his mother's Eagle Scout journey deserves its own celebration.

To hear the song and to get the lyrics go to:

<http://blog.scoutingmagazine.org/2014/01/21/unsung-heroes-no-more-watch-eagle-scout-moms-get-their-due/>

Ideas for a Memorable Eagle Court of Honor



Try these readers' tips from *Scouting Magazine* to make your troop's next eagle scout court of honor memorable:

<http://scoutingmagazine.org/2000/03/scouters-speak-ideas-for-a-memorable-eagle-court-of-honor/>

How to Request Congratulatory Letters for your Eagle Scout



Earning the Eagle Scout Award is something to write home about — literally. Politicians, astronauts, celebrities, and other recognizable figures have been sending hand-signed letters to new Eagle Scouts for, well, 100-plus years.

The very first congratulatory letter was sent in 1912 when the first Eagle Scout, Arthur R. Eldred, received a note from James E. West, the first Chief Scout Executive.

Today, parents and Scout leaders can request these scrapbook-worthy keepsakes from pretty much anyone with a mailbox. But who is known to respond, and how do you contact them? And when do you send off these requests anyway?

When to request Eagle Scout letters

After a boy completes his board of review, he's officially an Eagle Scout. But most boys don't have their Eagle court of honor until weeks or months later, so that's your window for requesting and receiving letters.

Of course, any letters you don't get by the ceremony date can still be added to the boy's Eagle Scout scrapbook later

Whom to ask for letters

- City and county officials: Your mayor, city council officials, school board president, superintendent, parks and recreation director
- Religious leaders
- State officials: The governor, your area's state legislators
- Business leaders: CEOs and executives at major corporations based in your city
- U.S. officials: The president, cabinet members, senators, representatives, military leaders, department heads
- Past presidents or elected officials no longer in office
- Prominent national people: astronauts, athletes, filmmakers, actors, and famous Eagle Scouts like Mike Rowe or Steven Spielberg
- Anyone who means something to your Eagle Scout: Get creative! Does he have a favorite author, athlete, musician, or actor? Try to track down that person's contact information. The letter may go unanswered, but it only costs you a stamp to try.

Where to find addresses

One excellent resource is from the U.S. Scouting Service Project:

<http://usscouts.org/eagle/eaglecongrats.asp>

For addresses not listed there, find the appropriate Web site and look for the "Contact Us" link — usually at the top of the page or at the very bottom.

Some entities, such as NASA or the U.S. Army, allow you to submit request online. Many of those links are at the U.S. Scouting Service Project, as well.

What to include

The U.S. Scouting Service Project recommends including the Scout's full name, troop number, council, and a short description of his Eagle Scout service project. For best results, address it to a specific person, not an organization.

Including a self-addressed stamped envelope makes it that much easier to get a response.

Final thoughts

Go for quality over quantity. Think about it: Would your Eagle Scout prefer four or five letters from people that are important to him or three dozen mainly from people he's never heard of?

Plus, as the U.S. Scouting Service Project notes, keeping the total number of requests from new Eagles to a manageable size may prevent someone from refusing to accept requests altogether.

Bryan Wendel, senior editor of *Scouting* magazine has also written a short article on how to request congratulatory letters: <http://blog.ScoutingMagazine.org/2012/05/02/how-to-request-congratulatory-letters-for-your-eagle-scout/>

To Parents at an Eagle Court of Honor

Reprinted from www.scoutmastercg.com, July 9, 2014



Here's an idea of what can be said at an Eagle Court of Honor to help parents understand their role in Scouting.

This is a big day, and it all goes by fast. Before we go any further; mom and dad, take a moment to look at your Scout.

A Scout goes through uncertain times to get to a day like today.

Take a moment to think about every boy who becomes a Scout. As a crowd, they are predictable.

As individuals, well, you never quite know.

Who knows what they'll be thinking and doing today? They wake up in a new world every morning. Yesterday they may have been passionate about one thing; tomorrow they'll have their hearts set on another – who can tell?

Scouting thrives on all this uncertainty by setting surmountable obstacles, asking the right questions, and guiding them towards the right answers. Scouting provides a safe environment where failure has real consequences, and success has real rewards. As Scouts do all the things that Scouts do they learn to do for themselves and serve the interests of others.

Each one of them makes their own way; some Scouts make it to an Eagle Court of Honor.

I've been around long enough now to watch our Scouts go from a day like today to become college professors, army captains, engineers, teachers, television personalities, lawyers, executives, doctors, and tradesmen. While they follow different paths they all become decent, contributing, citizens with a sense of service, and decent human beings with a sense of compassion.

That's our measure of success in Scouting, that's our aim.

The Eagle Scouts we recognize today stand astride their futures. It will be some time before we know what they will become.

They approach their future knowing they have what it takes to achieve. The badge and medal we present today symbolize this vast potential.

I get to talk to many Scouts; it's the best part of my job as a Scoutmaster. Most have at least some idea how you get to a day like today; but they aren't exactly sure.

It takes three things to become an Eagle Scout, desire, drive, and a family's support and encouragement.

I'll tell you that drive comes from desire, not the other way around. Scouts have to want to reach a day like today; they can't be driven towards it, and we wouldn't want to drive them if we could.

We can't drive them, but we can look for that spark of desire, encourage it, and give it room to grow.

So, before we go any further, look at your Scout. What will he become? What does life hold in store?

You can help him reach a day like today; it's an opportunity waiting there for him. Let's all do our part to make it a reality.

Read this Poem Aloud at a Future Eagle Scout Court of Honor



It must've been pretty dusty in the room when Tom Lalor read the poem he had written for his stepson Jonathan. Everyone in the whole place got a little misty-eyed.

Lalor read his poem, which you can see below, at Troop 251's Eagle Scout court of honor in Larimer, Pa. Jodie Spagnolli, committee chairwoman for Troop 251, sent Bryan On Scouting the poem — with Lalor's permission to reprint it.

The poem "was just incredible," Spagnolli writes. "There was not one person in the room that didn't dab at the corner of their eye after hearing it."

Here it is. I think it's worth inclusion at your troop's next Eagle Scout court of honor, don't you?

The Eagle

Written by Tom Lalor for Jonathan Lint

Twas the Eagle they chose, as a symbol of strength for a
new and mighty land.

That was forged in Truth, and Liberty; delivered
By God's own hand.

That Eagle stands for Integrity and Pride
Throughout our age.

To remind us of the wars we've fought for
Freedom and the price we've paid.

And so it was when Lord Powell called on his troop
Of boys to be men,

That this symbol so strong, so pure and so proud
Was called to serve again.

Not every Scout can wear this badge, in fact they
Are but few

Who rise above their peers today to remind us of
What is true.

That Loyalty and being good will always be our aim,
That Courage and Faith are the best of us, that
The Eagle knows no shame.

These honored few who wear this badge walk
Among us to this day.

To exemplify the very best that we strive for,
So now we pray;

That God will bless and keep these Scouts always
In His sight.

For it is they, not us who know it best, the Eagle
Stands for Right.

Other Awards & Patches

BSA's Cyber Chip



Today's youth are spending more time than ever using digital media for education, research, socializing, and fun. To help families and volunteers keep youth safe while online, the Boy Scouts of America introduces the Cyber Chip. The Cyber Chip joins the Totin' Chip and Whittling Chip as important safety tools your Scouts should earn and carry with them. In developing this exciting new tool, the BSA teamed up with content expert NetSmartz®, part of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children® and training expert for many law enforcement agencies.

NetSmartz® has created a Scouting portal showcasing Cyber Chip resources, including grade-specific videos, for each level. Topics include cyberbullying, cell phone use, texting, blogging, gaming, and identity theft.

For more information:

www.scouting.org/Training/YouthProtection/CyberChip.aspx

Award and Recognition Replacement Site



A new website (www.awardreplacements.kintera.org/bsa) has been created to order new and replacement Eagle Scout credentials along with replacement award items for the George Meany Award, Vale la Pena Award, Lifesaving or Meritorious Action Award, and Wood Badge wallet card.

Also, effective immediately, the fee for expedited shipping has been increased from \$25 to \$40.

If you have any questions, please contact Rhonda DeVaney at 972-580-2441

National Outdoor Awards



To recognize that passion for adventure, the BSA has announced its new **National Outdoor Awards**. The awards are available to Boy Scouts and Varsity Scouts who meet specific requirements in one of five subject areas: camping, hiking, aquatics, riding, and adventure.

There are two levels of the award. Boys start with the **National Outdoor Badges**. These are earned by boys who demonstrate "that they are knowledgeable, safe, and comfortable in the outdoor activity covered by the badge." Each segment is earned by completing the First Class rank, earning relevant merit badges, and accumulating experience—nights of camping, miles of hiking, hours of swimming, etc. Once they earn a segment, boys can go the extra mile (in some cases literally) and shoot for gold or silver devices, available for spending extra time on a particular activity.

The badges and devices are impressive, but the highest honor for outdoor lovers is the **National Medal for Outdoor Achievement**.

For more information or to download the applications:

www.scouting.org/scoutsource/BoyScouts/Youth/Awards/NOA.aspx

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award



HRH The Prince Edward, Earl of Wessex – the Queen of England's youngest son – visited the United States in May to promote one of the British Royal Family's principal charities for youth, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Founded in 1956 by the Queen's husband, HRH The Prince Philip, duke of Edinburgh, this international award program now operates in more than 140 countries around the world reaching more than 8 million youth. In 2010, the Award formed a national partnership with BSA. NCAC began offering the DofE Award locally in 2011.

To earn a Bronze, Silver, or Gold Duke of Edinburgh's Award, youth participate for 6-18 months in activities in four areas: physical fitness, special skills community service, and adventurous journey. Participants choose their own activities in these areas, utilizing existing interests or pursuing new ones and spending at least an hour per week on each. Participants must also embark on an adventurous journey to challenge themselves in the great outdoors while discovering new experiences and learning the importance of teamwork and self-reliance.

The DofE award is an internationally renowned honor that, like Eagle Scout sets youth apart from their peers by highlighting their dedication to service and commitment to excellence. Youth are eligible to continue working towards their award until age 25.

Visit www.USAward.org for more.

National Outdoor Challenge Award



The National Outdoor Challenge recognizes troops that maintain or increase the amount of outdoor activity when compared to the previous year. With the release of this award, the National Camping Award has been discontinued.

The award is recognized with a streamer for the unit flag.

The application is available at: www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/430-016_WB.pdf

National Outdoor Achievement Award

The National Outdoor Achievement Award recognizes Boy Scouts/Varsity Scouts who excel in outdoor participation. The award has five areas of emphasis (camping, aquatics, hiking, riding, and adventure) with rigorous requirements to earn each segment.

For Scouts looking for an extra challenge, there's the National Medal for Outdoor Achievement. This challenging award requires earning at least three of the National Outdoor Achievement segments, planning and leading a trek, earning Wilderness First Aid certification, and becoming a Leave No Trace Trainer, as well as fulfilling several other requirements.

Den Chief Service Award



The Den Chief Service Award is awarded to a Boy Scout, Varsity Scout or Venturer who has served as a Den Chief for a full year and completed a set of other requirements. Den Chiefs who earn the award may wear the Service Award in addition to the standard den chief cord of their office, and may continue to wear it for as long as they are a youth Scout.

Requirements: www.USScouts.org/advance/boyscout/denchief.asp

SCOUTStrong Healthy Unit Award gets Updated



Is snacking smart, drinking right and moving more a priority in your Scout unit? It should be. And it's time to get the patch to prove it.

The Boy Scouts of America, in collaboration with Healthy Kids Out of School, has launched a new edition of the SCOUTStrong Healthy Unit Award. Originally a pilot program in the northeast, it is now available nationwide in a new edition.

Who can earn it?

The patch is for Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts and Venturers. You can earn it as a den, troop, pack or crew.

How do you earn it?

Practice three healthy principles during your meetings and/or gatherings, creating a new norm. Just follow the 3-6-9 plan:

- **Snack Smart:** Eat fruits and vegetables for snacks when snacks are provided at three meetings
- **Drink Right:** Have water over sugary beverages at six meetings
- **Move More:** Enjoy 15 minutes of physical activity at nine meetings

Best part is, the three healthy meeting practices align with many existing Scout requirements and awards. For example, the Cooking merit badge. A Boy Scout could provide his troop with a healthy snack that he prepared and mark off that requirement while also helping his troop earn the award.

What resources are available?

There's a ton of great content available on the SCOUTStrong Healthy Unit Award page (www.scouting.org/ScoutStrongHealthyUnit.aspx). Such as:

- Customized tracker for each level of Scouting (Tigers through Boy Scouts), in order to track your unit's progress toward earning the patch.
- Ideas for active games, healthy snacks and activities to get Scouts on board with the healthy practices.
- Resources for Scout parents or volunteers that introduce the patch and provide ideas for easy and healthy snacks to bring to meetings.

What's new about this award?

The new version of this award has two big differences:

- The patch has been redesigned.
- Instead of sending your completed tracking form to the Healthy Kids Out of School team, you're now on the honor system. After completing the requirements, you may print the certificate yourself and buy the patches yourself.

What do I do once my unit earns the award?

1. Print the certificate. www.scouting.org/filestore/ScoutStrong/pdf/220-801.pdf

Purchase the patches for you and your Scouts. <http://www.scoutstuff.org/emb-pala-healthy-unit.html>

How to Earn Scouting's International Spirit Award



All Scouts and Scouters wear the World Crest, that purple circle symbolizing their membership in the world movement of Scouting. But that patch is just the beginning of your introduction to international Scouting. With the world Scout jamboree coming to the Summit Bechtel Reserve in 2019, the time is right to start working toward the International Spirit Award.

WHO CAN EARN THE AWARD? Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, Varsity Scouts, Venturers and adult leaders. Requirements vary by group.

WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS? At each level, a Scout or Scouter must complete several core requirements, as well as several of 10 experience requirements. The core requirements generally focus on knowledge; the experience requirements generally focus on activity.

WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF CORE REQUIREMENTS? Cub Scouts must learn 10 words in a foreign language and play two games from another culture. Boy Scouts and Varsity Scouts must earn the Citizenship in the World merit badge and the World Conservation Award. Adult leaders must learn about the World Organization of the Scout Movement and read the most recent International Department newsletter. At each level, an applicant must organize a World Friendship Fund collection at a unit meeting or district roundtable and participate in Jamboree-on-the-Air or Jamboree-on-the-Internet, sister activities that occur each October.

WHAT ARE EXAMPLES OF EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS? These include hosting an international Scout or unit, participating in an international Scouting event like the world Scout jamboree, earning the Interpreter strip, learning how to obtain a U.S. passport, and visiting another country with your family or Scout unit.

IS INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL REQUIRED? No.

IS THERE A TIME LIMIT? All requirements must be completed within five years of starting work.

WHAT ARE THE RECOGNITION ITEMS? The International Spirit Award emblem (\$4) is a temporary patch worn centered on the right uniform pocket. It does not replace the World Crest.

WHO SIGNS OFF? For youth members, the unit leader approves the application. For adult leaders, the council's international representative signs off. Completed applications should be mailed, with payment, to the International Department, S340, Boy Scouts of America, P.O. Box 152079, Irving, TX 75015.

HOW DOES THIS AWARD RELATE TO THE INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITY EMBLEM AND THE YOUTH EXCHANGE EMBLEM? This award replaces those emblems.

WHAT ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL SCOUTER'S AWARD? That award, which is represented by a knot worn on the adult uniform shirt, is still available. It encourages Scouters to broaden their involvement in Scouting through participation in world Scouting activities and recognizes Scouters for their contributions to world Scouting.

WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION? Visit <http://scouting.org/international>

PatchScan App and Official BSA Hologram



“Only three of these patches were ever made. Baden-Powell’s granddaughter sewed each one by hand using thread from a jacket once worn by James E. West.”

Does that patch-trading pitch make your Spidey sense tingle?

In the past, you might have just laughed, said “no deal” and walked away. Now, verifying the claim is as easy as pulling out your smartphone.

The BSA’s official, free PatchScan app (www.patchscan.com), available for iOS and Android devices, takes the guesswork out of patch trading and reduces your chances of trading for a “limited-edition” patch that’s actually 1 of 50,000.

The process is simple. You open the app, scan the QR code on the back of a patch and wait for the patch’s stats to appear on screen.

Why is this app necessary? Because while we all know Scouts and Scouters are trustworthy, some odious outsiders see creating faux BSA memorabilia as a way to make a quick buck.

PatchScan is one of two tools the BSA’s Supply Group has in place to help you identify authentic products. The other is a hologram, like the one seen to the left, that tells you you’re holding an officially licensed product. Look for it on BSA merchandise including headwear, apparel, patches and more.

PatchScan has already been used more than 100,000 times by Scouts and Scouters looking for a leg up in the game of patch trading and collecting. QR codes will become mandatory on council shoulder patches, jamboree shoulder patches, OA lodge flaps and pocket patches, and sets of flaps or CSPs beginning in June 2014.

Key Facts about PatchScan

- **Cost:** Adding QR codes won’t increase the cost of most patches. The majority (84 percent) of the BSA’s licensees indicated they do not intend to raise the base price of patches to cover the minimal costs of adding these unique identifying codes.
- **QR code optional:** The QR Code does not have to be applied to event patches such as those for camporees, Polar Bear, or similar events; however, the code may be applied to event patches at the council’s request, or at the licensee’s discretion.
- **QR code mandatory:** BSA Licensees must affix QR code stickers to Jamboree Shoulder Patches, Council Shoulder Patches (including special CSPs, such as FOS, Eagle Scout, etc.), Order of the Arrow Lodge Flaps and pocket patch sets delivered to a customer on or after June 1, 2014.
- **No QR code?** A patch without a QR code isn’t automatically fake. Authentic patches created before June 1, 2014, might have a hologram sticker or a BSA licensee logo in the backing.

Is your Scout a Complete Angler?



If a Boy Scout you know loves fishing, here's his chance to prove it.

The BSA Complete Angler Recognition honors Boy Scouts who earn all three fishing-related merit badges: Fishing, Fly-Fishing and Fish and Wildlife Management.

The recognition was developed by the BSA National Fishing Task Force and replaces the Certified Angler Award. Unlike that previous award, the Complete Angler Recognition doesn't require an online test. Once a boy earns the three merit badges, he's eligible to receive the patch.

The program is supported by the BSA Supply Group, which will deliver the newly designed, controlled-access patch to Scout Shops. (Controlled-access means you can't buy it online because you'll need to prove a boy is eligible to earn it.)

Adults, there's a new fishing patch for you, too. The BSA Certified Angling Instructor courses help you deliver a fishing experience Scouts won't forget.

For more about the badge and program go to:

www.scouting.org/Home/OutdoorProgram/Fishing.aspx or see Bryan on Scouting's article about it:

<http://blog.scoutingmagazine.org/2015/04/03/complete-angler-and-certified-angling-instructor/>

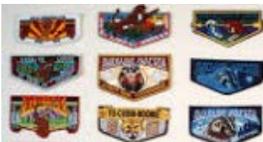
Earning the Religious Knot



A variety of religious emblems programs are used by the Boy Scouts to encourage youth to learn about their faith and to recognize adults who provide significant service to youth in a religious environment. These religious programs are created, administered and awarded by the various religious groups, not the BSA, but each program must be recognized by the BSA.

The award given by the religious organization consists of a unique medal for each program— usually only worn on formal occasions. The award is also recognized by the wearing of an embroidered square knot emblem— silver on purple for youth and purple on silver for adults. The knot emblem is universal in that it does not represent any specific religion or religious award program. Each medal is designed and produced by the religious institution, while the knot emblems are produced by the BSA. The youth religious knot may be further identified as to level by the wearing of a miniature pin-on device. The first-level program is identified by the Cub Scout device and the second by the Webelos device. The third-level uses the Boy Scout device. The fourth-level program for Venturers, senior Boy Scouts and senior Varsity Scouts is recognized by the use of the Venturer device, regardless of the program division of the youth.

NCAC's Online Trading Post



The latest addition to NCAC's new Council website is the online trading post! Visit the site at www.NCACBSA.org/TradingPost to stock up on all your favorite council shoulder patches and Order of the Arrow pocket flaps, including the new limited edition 2016 NESAs DC patch.

Certificates



A significant part of Scout ceremonies is recognizing those who have achieved something or extending appreciation for those who have volunteered their time and efforts. A simple way to do this is to award a certificate that is “suitable for framing.” The on-line resource below prints a wide variety of Scouting related certificates right from your PC. There is nothing to buy – just fill out the form and print a custom certificate for your next ceremony, Blue and Gold, or Derby.

URL: <http://cyberbasetradingpost.com/certificates/>

Outdoor Ethics Awareness Award



Guided by the Outdoor Code and Leave No Trace, millions of Scouts have enhanced their awareness of the natural world around them, minimizing impact to the land. For Scouts who have a deep interest in the outdoors, nature, and the environment, Scouting’s outdoor ethics will give you an ever-deeper appreciation of the richness of the land and how we fit into it. If you are prepared to venture down the path of really becoming aware of your surroundings, of building the skills that will allow you to leave no trace on the land, then the Outdoor Ethics Awareness and Action Awards are for you.

For more information about the award go to:

www.scouting.org/scoutsource/outdoorprogram/outdoorethics/awards.aspx

Wearing the Totin’ Chip Patch



The Totin’ Chip Patch is the same shape as the flap over the right pocket so that’s obviously the place to put it, right? Wrong!

The BSA’s *Guide to Awards and Insignia* says that neither the “Totin’ Chip” nor the “Firem’n Chit” patch is for uniform wear except centered on the right pocket (the “temporary patch” position, which would better be named the “at the wearer’s discretion” position) or on the back of the merit badge sash. The only patch that ‘officially’ goes on the flap is the Order of the Arrow Lodge Patch.

Hometown USA Award Rewards Scouts for Efforts to Keep America Beautiful



Always leave a place better than you found it.

For more than 100 years, Scouts have followed that doctrine everywhere they go. It’s in our DNA. And it’s why the Boy Scouts of America has teamed up with Keep America Beautiful, a nonprofit devoted to ending littering, improving recycling and beautifying America’s communities.

The embodiment of that partnership is the Keep America Beautiful Hometown USA Award, a fun way to honor Boy Scouts who help improve their communities in demonstrable ways.

Boy Scouts can earn the award by completing a community service project and earning three merit badges from a list of 13.

For a complete listing of the requirements, the application, and how to get the patch go to:

www.scouting.org/Home/BoyScouts/Youth/KeepAmericaBeautiful.aspx

Camping

General

Packing Lists



www.ScoutLists.com was first envisioned by Bill, a Scoutmaster who found himself giving the same information to dozens of new Scouts and their parents each year. The questions were very important, but not really new:

- What does my son need for this campout?
- Will the \$3 plastic poncho work for backpacking?
- What sort of sleeping bag should he bring?
- Does he need a duffel bag, backpack, or will a suitcase work?

Like most scoutmasters, he created standard lists that would be handed out for each event, and he gave talks, over and over, and over again. He would remind the scouts prior to the meeting to use the packing list, but then he would tell them about the nonstandard things that this event would need. Of course, Scouts would lose the lists handed out at the meeting, most often they would forget about the special instructions, and the parents would be none the wiser.

It dawned on him that each piece of gear may be required, optional, or unneeded depending on the activity you are doing, when you are doing it, and where you are doing it. With the help of friends, family, and other Scouters, Bill put together a team that defined almost 70,000 data points around when a piece of gear is needed/optional/unneeded for a given activity, in a given climate, during a given season, and a way was created to give you, the adventurer, a simple way to access that data to generate a packing list appropriate for what you are doing, where you are doing it, and when you are going.

Pack Family Camping



BSA rules for family camping are:

- They are focused on age-appropriate Cub Scout activities
- They are conducted at council-approved locations. For a listing of NCAC approved sites go to the Council website → Camps → Cub Scout Outdoor Guidelines
- If nonmembers (siblings) participate, the event must be structured accordingly to accommodate them. BSA health and safety and Youth Protection policies apply. In most cases, each youth member will be under the supervision of a parent or guardian. In all cases, each youth participant is responsible to a specific adult.
- At least one adult must have completed Basic Adult Leader Outdoor Orientation (BALOO, No. 34162) to properly understand the importance of program intent, Youth Protection policies, health and safety, site selection, age-appropriate activities, and sufficient adult participation.

A Post-Campout Checklist Every Scout or Venturer Needs



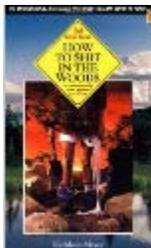
It's Sunday night after a fun but exhausting weekend of camping. But before your Scout or Venturer collapses on the couch with a book, favorite show or videogame, hand them their post-campout checklist. You'll be glad to have everything put away properly and your Scout smelling good again. They'll be glad upon arrival at their next campout to find everything clean and ready for use.

By following the 10-step post-campout checklist below, your Scouts/Venturers can make the transition from Scouting on Sunday to school on Monday much easier.

1. **Dry your tent and gear.** Just say no to mold. Put your tent up to dry right away, preferably outside or in the garage. Do the same with your sleeping bag, rain jacket and anything else that might still be damp. Or don't, and risk finding out at the next troop or crew meeting that you left your gear rolled up in the back of a leader's hot car!
2. **Wash your clothes.** Don't take your backpack or bag to your room. Instead, head straight for the laundry room. Why? First, if there are any bugs in the clothes they get washed (killed). If you rubbed around in some poison ivy, this washes away the oil the plant deposited on the clothes.
3. **Put away food.** What do you do with leftover food from your patrol box? Hopefully the answer isn't to simply leave it in there. Gross.
4. **Take a shower.** Your clothes are getting cleaned, but what about you? That foul smell — yeah, it's probably you.
5. **Apply bite treatment,** if needed
6. **Care for those feet.** See peeling skin around your toes or the bottoms of your feet? That may be athlete's foot, especially if you were recently in a shower used by other Scouts. Find over-the-counter treatment for athlete's foot. This will keep the rest of your family from getting infected. Oh, and next time, remember those shower shoes!
7. **Watch for fleas and ticks.**
8. **Have a headache?** If you came home with a headache or you're overly tired, don't rush for the aspirin just yet. Instead, drink some water.
9. **Organize those advancement records.** Now that you're clean, it's time to make sure all that advancement work wasn't for naught. Record the campout in your Boy Scout Handbook, marking down how many nights you were camping.

Relax. At last, you're done. Everything is taken care of, and you can plop in front of your favorite game or the TV. But wait: Is your homework done?

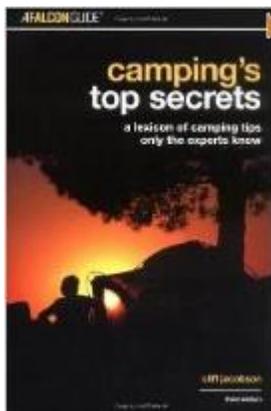
Book – How to Sh— in the Woods



Kathleen Meyer realized that there was no completely frank discussion of how (and how not) to sh— in the woods. She put pen to paper and came up with this pithy, humorous yet informative tome. Well worth reading as pulling it off properly does require some lost skills.

Available from Amazon in paperback, about \$10. Customer reviews give it a 4.3 out of 5 stars.

Book – Camping's Top Secrets



Camping's Top Secrets goes beyond the scope of traditional camping books, revealing hundreds of field-tested tips to enhance your next outdoor adventure. With clear descriptions organized alphabetically for quick reference, this guide by veteran camping consultant Cliff Jacobson divulges the best-kept secrets of the experts.

Get insider tips on:

- forecasting the weather
- rigging a canoe or boat
- treating drinking water
- using tents and other types of shelters
- dealing with animal and insect encounters
- cooking and cookware
- treating common ailments
- using maps and GPS units
- camping with kids
- choosing camping clothes, boots, sleeping bags, and gear

and much more!

Available from Amazon, \$6 paperback

Cliff Jacobson – Plain Speaking on Camping



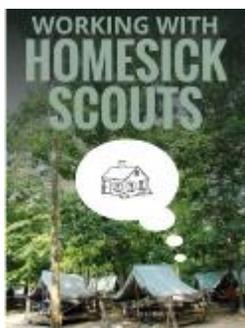
Here's a series of five videos featuring camping guru Cliff Jacobson talking about the nuts and bolts of canoe camping courtesy of the folks at Morral River Films

A respected outdoors writer and wilderness guide Cliff is the most published canoeing/camping writer of this century. Cliff is the author of *Expedition Canoeing*, *Camping's Top Secrets* and a frequent contributor to *Boys Life* and *Scouting* magazine.. It's no surprise that Cliff is also a Distinguished Eagle Scout who found his life's work in his early years as a Scout.

In this series of five videos Cliff avuncular style gets to the point without mincing words; "Listen, sonny, I've done this stuff – I know what I am talking about." Cliff's advice is not just for canoeists, but all campers. Take the time to listen; you'll be glad you did.

<http://www.scoutmastercg.com/cliff-jacobson-plain-speaking-camping/>

Book – Working with Homesick Scouts



If you are headed off to camp this summer it's likely you will be working with one or more homesick Scouts. Understanding, preventing and treating homesickness ought to be approached like administering first aid for any other illness or injury. Homesickness is not imaginary, it's not an indication of weakness or lack of character, it's not a symptom of bad parenting or bad leadership and, thankfully, it's reasonably easy to prevent.

Scout leaders and parents of Scouts should consider following a homesickness prevention plan well before the Scouts are headed to camp. For advice on how to do this see the article at www.scoutmastercg.com/homesick-scouts-2/

Tips to Remember When Animal Proofing Your Campsite



If an animal can't smell your food, it won't get your food! Keep a scrupulously clean camp. Pick up, seal and pack out every scrap of uneaten food. Pack leftovers inside odor-proof plastic bags (such as Loksak, loksak.com). Another option is a bear canister, which is made of strong plastic with a heavy-duty lid that animals cannot pry open. Don't forget: Always handle odor-proof bags or a canister with clean hands!

It's OK to smell like the great outdoors. Artificial smells also attract wild animals. A bear that's a mile from your camp won't smell your freeze-dried spaghetti, but it will smell deodorant. Avoid using any scented "smellables," such as lotions or soaps. If you choose to use a smellable, do so in the morning so the smell deteriorates before bedtime. Always change into clean clothes that have not been exposed to these scented products before bed. Any smellable products must be sealed in an odor-proof bag and stored away from camp with your food.

If an animal can't see your food, it won't get your food! Once an animal finds food in a pack, box or can, it will seek out similar containers with hopes of securing a meal. This means you should keep ice chests, boxes and packs out of sight. And don't store food in tents or other places where people gather.

Hanging your food doesn't mean it's out of reach. A bear cub can climb a 70-foot-tall tree in about 10 seconds. Mama bear can climb, too — slower than her cub, but faster than you. So "treeing" your food won't necessarily keep it safe from critters that climb. Why, then, do many park authorities ask campers to hang their food? For your own safety!

Separating food and humans is the safest solution. Most campsites have only a few trees with horizontal branches that meet the guidelines for hanging food (about 20 feet high and approximately 8 feet from the trunk of the tree, according to the Fieldbook), and animals that climb know them all. If you do tree your food, do not use the same tree as everyone else. (Unless you're at a Scout camp, like Philmont, with designated poles and cables used specifically to hang food bags.)

Another option: Take your food out of camp and hide it in the woods. Do this only if it's packed in a waterproof and odor-proof container, like a bear canister or bear box supplied at some park campsites.

Make garbage a priority. Scouting practices lean heavily on Leave No Trace ethics. Among these principles is the act of setting up your sleeping area at least 200 feet from where your unit will cook or store anything smellable. Always clean up spilled food or leftover food particles, and you must strain all wash water and distribute it at least 200 feet from camp.

In terms of trash, Scouts pack out everything they pack in. This should, of course, be done with caution. Carrying garbage in your pack while hiking through bear country could be a recipe for an attack. Make sure the garbage is sealed in an odor-proof bag or container. In some instances (if park-permitted), you might wish to burn food scraps instead of carrying them in your pack in areas highly populated by bears. And you should never throw leftover food down park toilets or box latrines.

Chipmunks, squirrels and other rodents are usually a bigger nuisance than bears. Fortunately, the rules that work to help deter bears work for these animals, too. Just because a squirrel doesn't pose a threat to your life doesn't mean you should forget about animal-proofing techniques when you're not camping in bear country.

Tips to Remember When Animal-Proofing your Campsite



Around midnight, three bears — a sow and two cubs — strolled into our camp, lured by something scattered on the ground: Our Scouts had used their extra snacks as ammunition in a food fight when I wasn't looking.

When the bears had devoured every discarded morsel, they lumbered around camp, probing packs and peering into tents. We were all scared senseless! The bears finally waddled into the night, leaving us to pack up fast and head to another campsite, where we hoped to avoid another bear encounter...

To see the rest of the *Scouting* magazine article go to:

<http://scoutingmagazine.org/2015/04/tips-remember-animal-proofing-campsite/>

Quiz Yourself on How Well You Know How to Animal-Proof a Campsite



Ask people what they're most afraid of on a camping trip, and they're likely to say "bears!" Some are afraid they'll be eaten alive by one; others are worried that a bear will get into their food. But raccoons, chipmunks and rodents are generally more worrisome camp robbers than bears.

Test yourself with this quiz to see how much you know about animal-proofing your campsite: <http://scoutingmagazine.org/2015/04/quiz-well-know-animal-proof-campsite/>

Test your Knowledge of Backcountry Camping



Camping in an area where help is hours or days away requires practiced skills and knowledge. Can your Scouts make fire in the rain? Rig tents and tarps so they won't blow down in wind? Identify an advancing storm? Take this quiz and see how much you know about the wild outdoors:

<http://scoutingmagazine.org/2015/10/test-knowledge-backcountry-camping/>

20+ Camping Apps & Outdoor Apps Ideal for the Campsite (Apple & Android)



There are so many ways camping apps can entertain and assist us in our outdoor endeavours, especially if you are glamping (glamour camping) and want to make your trip as relaxing as possible. This site (www.inspiredcamping.com/best-camping-and-outdoor-apps/) has investigated some of the best ones available for the Apple iPhone and iPad and they have come up with the following recommendations they felt could help to enhance the camping app experience for the campsite generation. Camping apps for Android and other smart devices are also available:

Camping Sites

CampScout by Boy's Life



Use this official Boy Scouts of America/Boys' Life magazine app (www.boyslife.org/campscout) to plan your next outing with ease! Find BSA properties near you and with the activities you want to do. Across the county or across the country, you'll be able to find the perfect spot for your next adventure. From winter sports to fishing, boating to bicycling, skateboarding to ATVs, Camp Scout has you covered.

Camp Scout by Boys' Life includes:

- Park Overviews
- Activities & Descriptions
- Maps & Directions
- Important Phone Numbers
- Weather information
- and more!

Pick and choose from among 20 different activities and features to find the right place for you, and your friends and family. You can quickly toggle back and forth to find locations that have any or all of the following activities:

- | | | |
|------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| • ATV | • Ecology | • Lodging |
| • Accessible Locations | • Fishing | • Orienteering |
| • Bicycling | • Food Service | • Shooting |
| • Boating | • Geocaching | • Skate Park |
| • COPE | • Hiking | • Water Sports |
| • Camping | • Historic Trails | • Winter Sports |
| • Climbing | • Horseback Riding | |

Compatibility: Requires iOS 7.0 or later. Compatible with iPhone, iPad, and iPod touch. This app is optimized for iPhone 5.

Book – Scout Camps USA – A Guide to BSA Camps, Camping & High Adventure



The third edition of Scout Camps USA (www.ScoutCampsUSA.com, \$19.95 plus shipping, Pfairco Publications), offers more valuable information than ever for Scout units planning high adventure trips, special summer camp experiences, weekend outings, and many other kinds of activities and adventures.

The 352-page nonofficial guide lists nearly 800 BSA council and national camps, ranches, reservations, aquatic bases, high adventure bases, and Cub Scout Worlds across the nation, with locations noted on large state maps.

Also included are more than 60 military installations with camping opportunities, 46 historic ships with overnight programs, 200 non-BSA campsites and programs, plus visit reports on many locations and articles on topics from "How to Buy Canoes" to "Collecting Camp Patches."

Book – Scout Camps USA – A Guide to BSA Camps, Camping & High Adventure

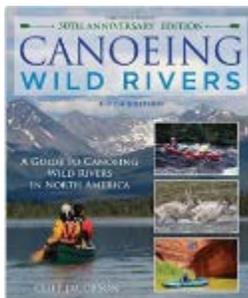


The Outbound is a website (www.theoutbound.com) and iOS app dedicated to helping everyday people discover the best outdoor adventures nearby. Easily find the best spots to hike, camp, chill, and more - all with a simple interface, incredible photography, and great write-ups.

The Outbound's goal is to spread the excitement of outdoor adventure, whether just down the street or across the globe, by inspiring people to discover, explore, and share their favorite activities and local playgrounds.

It is their hope that by making it easier to find relevant information and harnessing the power of the community, they can encourage more people to enjoy and appreciate the outdoors.

Canoeing Wild Rivers



Review by Scoutmaster Clarke Green, <http://scoutmastercg.com/not-just-canoeing-wild-rivers/>

Reading Canoeing Wild Rivers is like attending a master class in wilderness travel. Cliff Jacobson's 30th anniversary edition of the classic *Expedition Canoeing* (now *Canoeing Wild Rivers*) is required reading for anyone planning or even thinking about a high adventure trip.

This completely updated and revised edition features dozens of full-color photos, how-to illustrations, source charts, canoeing and camping techniques, and a chapter full of hard-won advice from a couple of dozen canoeing experts, and a new chapter devoted to paddling desert and swamp rivers.

Although this is the best and only canoeing book of its type, and Jacobson writes in great detail about canoeing techniques; don't get the idea that this is just for canoeists!

Jacobson shares a lifetime of valuable how-to wisdom on camping, route-finding, and expedition techniques; but the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Beyond the immediately practical information aimed at canoeing the most valuable thing to be gained is the mindset of planning, preparing, and carrying out a wilderness trip.

A law student studies cases to understand the concepts and principles of the law. A wilderness trip leader studies Canoeing Wild Rivers to understand the concepts and principles of wilderness travel.

Cost is about \$22, paperback.

Guide to Cool Camps



Not all Boy Scout camps are created equal. Sure, each offers a terrific program to entertain and challenge Scouts, but every Scout camp has unique program elements that make it special. Scouting magazine has scoured the country to find some of the coolest Scout camps around. Check them out, and be sure to leave a comment if you've visited one of these Cool Camps.

Cool Camp Site: <http://ScoutingMagazine.org/2011/10/guide-to-cool-camps-2/>

Summer Camps

Two Things You (probably) Didn't Think About Taking to Summer Camp

Excerpted from Scoutmaster Clarke Green, May 28 2014., <http://scoutmastercg.com/>

Two humble things find a number of uses at summer camp; clothespins and index cards.

I usually have a pocket full of index cards, and use them all day long to take notes, leave messages, and post reminders or notices for youth leaders. With clothespins or thumbtacks I can clip them to a tent flap, a branch, or pin them to our bulletin board.



Here are some ideas that you may find useful and fun:

1. Simple “where is” board.

Someone is usually trying to find me at camp, or I am looking for someone else. A simple “where is” note can help folks figure out where to look first.

2. Summer Camp Chore Chart

Here's one idea your Senior Patrol Leader can use to assign patrol tasks for the day.



3. Notes and Notices

I can be reasonably sure a Scout will find a note clipped to his tent flap. I can use the same method to distribute mail from home or other information a particular Scout or youth leader needs.

4. Clothespin Obstacle Course

Two Scouts use 5 clothespins to attach themselves together and follow an obstacle course. The team who completes the course with the most pins still attached wins.

5. Clothespin Endurance Champion

Each Scout holds a clothespin pinched open between two fingers with their arm fully extended and elbow straight at shoulder level. The last Scout to hold this position wins.

6. Clothespin Hunt

A number of marked or colored clothespins are hidden around the campsite. The patrol who finds the most in a given time wins.

7. Clothespin Challenge

Which Scout or Patrol, in the opinion of their fellow Scouts, can create the best animal, gadget, or inventive use for clothespins by the end of the week? Whittling, a couple of Popsicle sticks from the trading post, some glue, lashings or the addition of other found objects – amazing things can be made from clothespins.

8. Hanging Clothes

Goes without saying, but I'll say it anyway.



Parental Tips for Preventing Homesickness at Summer Camp



It is not at all uncommon for kids to get homesick at camp, especially their first time. Parents can do a lot to help with the situation. These recommended steps may seem counter-intuitive in some cases, but they're based on many years of summer camp experience. The key is helping the boy to live in the moment – to stay focused on the activities he's involved in at camp rather than dwelling on what he's missing back home.

- It helps if your son attends Webelos resident camp with a parent along, before he first goes off to Boy Scout camp on his own for a week. Although he may still get homesick his first time at camp without you, he will get over it more quickly because camp is not a totally unfamiliar experience.
- Your attitude before camp makes a huge difference. As much as you might want to tell your son how much you (and his siblings, Grandma, the dog, etc.) will miss him ... don't. We are not suggesting you lie to him about it or act as if you're glad to get rid of him, but focus your conversations on the things he will be doing at camp, rather than what he will be missing at home.
- Do not make promises that you will come get him early if.... Instead, help him to focus on how he can use the resources available to him at camp – his fellow campers, unit leaders, and the camp staff – to deal with any problems or concerns he has while away.
- Send letters or even care packages. Make sure you mail them early enough to get to camp while he's there. If you send them early, mark on the envelope what day you want us to give them to him. Keep the letters positive, and again focus on what a good time he must be having at camp, rather than what he is missing at home. And whatever you do, don't say that you miss him (even though you do). This can often trigger a major case of homesickness.
- Don't plan on phone calls to or from camp. Do not ask your son to call you and do not promise to call him. Most camps have limited phone service that might make it impossible for him to call or for you to reach him. More importantly, experience shows that boys often become more homesick, not less, after a call home. Talking to Mom or Dad makes them focus on what's happening at home rather than what's going on at camp.
- For the same reason, do not allow your son to take a cell phone to camp, even if there is cell service available.

Winter Camping

Online Resources – Winter Camping

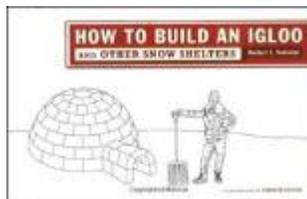


Winter camping is an advanced and challenging adventure. The winter camper has a respect for nature that the summer camper will never have. But as with most things in life, the most rewarding experience is the one that takes the most effort. If it were easy, then the personal reward and satisfaction that a winter camp out gives would not be the same. A Boy Scout has a unique opportunity to experience this first hand.

Check out some of the following sources on how to prepare for winter camping:

- www.ScoutScan.com/resources/winter.html
- www.princeton.edu/~oa/winter/wintcamp.shtml
- www.inquiry.net/outdoor/winter/gear/

Book – How to Build an Igloo: And Other Snow Shelters

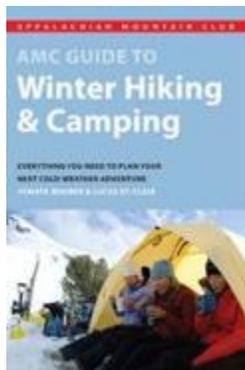


How are the ice blocks of igloos so perfectly formed and fitted, and able, it's been said, to withstand the weight of a polar bear? How can you determine if the fresh snow that's fallen outside your front door is as good for making a slab shelter as a snowman? What is a slab shelter, anyway? For that matter, what are drift caves, spruce traps, snow block walls, and bivy bag shelters, and how would you go about building them, whether for winter fun or protection from the weather?

In this instructive, whimsical, illustrated manual, Norbert E. Yankielun, a seasoned cold-regions explorer and researcher, takes readers step-by-step through the process of constructing and inhabiting a range of useful snow structures—from the most basic to the more complex. Whether you're a veteran backcountry skier or a backyard builder, this is one book you won't want to be without.

Available from Amazon, \$12.

Book – AMC Guide to Winter Hiking & Camping



Exploring the outdoors in winter is exhilarating, when you have the right skills. If you want to experience the special allure of hiking and backpacking during the snowy season, the AMC Guide to Winter Hiking and Camping is for you. This new guide from the Appalachian Mountain Club will help you plan your next trip, with a focus on preparation, safety, outdoor stewardship, and fun.

Inside you'll find:

- Recommended gear, clothing, and food for winter travel
- Safety tips for dealing with weather and preventing injuries
- Instructions for building a winter campsite or snow shelter
- Hints for hiking with kids, and more!

Available from Amazon, \$15.

Winter Camping Tips



Some tips to keep in mind when your troop takes on winter camping. For the full set go to www.boyscouttrail.com/library/wintercampingt看tips.asp

- Stay hydrated. It's easy to get dehydrated in the winter. Eat plenty of carbs.
- Bring extra food that doesn't need to be heated or cooked.
- Always eat hot meals (breakfast, lunch, & dinner.) Dutch ovens are the best – they keep the food hot longer. It doesn't need to be fancy DO cooking. Meals should be 1-pot meals to keep cleanup to a minimum. Don't get too fancy with the meals - it's hard to chop onions & carrots at -10°F with gloves on. Prep all meals at home in the warmth of the kitchen.
- Fill coffee/cook pots with water before bed. It's hard to pour frozen water, but easy to thaw it if it's already in the pot.
- COTTON KILLS! Do not bring cotton. Staying dry is the key to staying warm.
- Remember the 3 W's of layering - Wicking inside layer, Warmth middle layer(s) and Wind/Water outer layer. Wicking should be a polypropylene material as long underwear and also sock liner. Warmth layer(s) should be fleece or wool. The Wind/Water layer should be Gore-Tex or at least 60/40 nylon.
- Bring extra hand covering - mittens are warmer than gloves.
- Bring 2 changes of socks per day.
- Dress right while sleeping. Change into clean, dry clothes before bed. Your body makes moisture and your clothes hold it in - by changing into dry clothes you will stay warmer and it will help keep the inside of your sleeping bag dry. Wearing wool socks and long underwear (tops and bottoms) in the sleeping bag is OK.
- Put on tomorrow's t- shirt and underwear at bedtime. That way you won't be starting with everything cold next to your skin in the morning.
- Wear a stocking cap to bed, even if you have a mummy bag.
- Put tomorrow's clothes in your bag with you. This is especially important if you're small of stature. It can be pretty hard to warm up a big bag with a little body, the clothes cut down on that work.
- Put a couple of long-lasting hand warmers into your boots after you take them off. Your boots will dry out during the night.
- Eat a high-energy snack before bed, then brush your teeth. The extra fuel will help your body stay warm. Take a Snickers bar to bed and eat it if you wake up chilly in the night.
- Use a sleeping bag that is appropriate for the conditions.
- Use a sleeping bag liner. There are silk and fleece liners that go inside the sleeping bag. They will lower your sleeping bag's rating by up to 10 degrees. Or buy an inexpensive fleece throw or blanket and wrap yourself in it inside the sleeping bag.
- Don't burrow in - keep your mouth and nose outside the bag. Moisture from your breath collecting in your bag is a quick way to get real cold.
- Don't sleep directly on the ground. Get a closed cell foam pad to provide insulation between your sleeping bag and the ground. A foam pad cushions and insulates.
- A space blanket or silver lined tarp on the floor of the tent or under your sleeping bag will reflect your heat back to you.
- If in tents, leave the tent flaps/zippers vented a bit, it cuts down on interior frost.
- Drain your bladder before you go to bed. Having to go in the middle of the night when it is 5 degrees out chills your entire body. Drink all day, but stop one hour before bed.

Preventing Dehydration in Winter



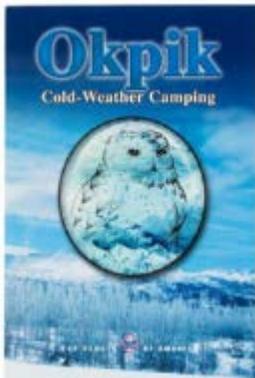
If you're not careful, it's very easy to become dehydrated in the winter particularly if you're engaged in sports like snowshoeing, backcountry skiing or mountaineering. Under these conditions, it's not enough to be on the lookout for yellow pee; you need to hydrate before exertion and regularly during all outdoor activities.

Dehydration is accelerated in cold weather or at higher altitudes because the air we breathe is drier. Normally, people lose between one to two quarts of water a day via evaporation from the lungs. When we breathe, our bodies humidify dry air and heat it up to our body's temperature, which is why your exhalations look like fog in cold weather.

In cold weather, your body has to work harder to humidify the air you breathe and to warm it up, meaning that you need to drink more water and eat more if you are outdoors. A good rule of thumb is to drink at least 4 quarts a day, but many people will drink twice that under high exertion levels or over 10,000 feet of altitude.

Psychologically, it's easy to skip hydration breaks during winter activities because you are less likely to feel thirsty. But the consequences are much higher, as dehydration can accelerate hypothermia, frostbite or fatigue. Therefore, you need to pace yourself accordingly and drink and eat at frequent intervals to keep up with the demands of your body

Book – Okpik: Cold-Weather Camping

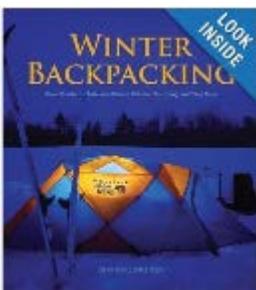


You want me to do what?! Sleeping outside when it's 40 degrees (or below) can sound like an invitation to days of unrelenting discomfort, but perhaps it can be something more. For generations, Boy Scouts have known how to weather the winter months with style, and it only takes some specific know-how to make this unique form of camping a rewarding one.

BSA's Okpik: Cold-Weather Camping guide (34040), is a great place to start. Drawing experience-based info from the BSA's Northern Tier Cold Weather Training program, this book can serve as the basis for a state-of-the-art training course designed to give leaders confidence in taking a small group into a cold environment.

Available from www.scoutstuff.org for \$10

Book – Winter Backpacking: Your Guide to Safe and Warm Winter Camping and Day Trips

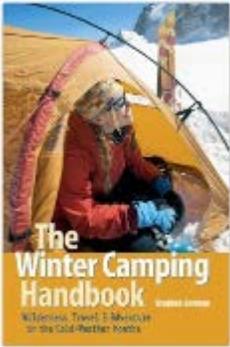


Backpacking in the winter months can be exhilarating, refreshing, and-with the help of this book-remarkably safe and comfortable too! All it takes is some good planning and learning some tricks to keep warm, dry and happy.

Whether you're new to backpacking in the winter months and looking to make the first experience as warm and enjoyable as possible, or a practiced winter backpacker interested in making day trips and camping trips more comfortable, this easy-to-read guide was written for you.

Available from Amazon (paperback) for \$16.40.

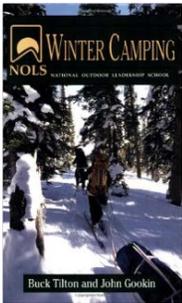
Book – The Winter Camping Handbook



Winter camping has its own special allure: the splendid quiet of a winter forest, the hush of falling snow, the thrill of gliding over ice and snow on skis. From building a snow shelter to traveling comfortably in sub-zero temperatures, *The Winter Camping Handbook* covers everything you'll need to know in order to enjoy wilderness travel and adventure in the cold weather months. Extremely user-friendly, the book's step-by-step approach covers everything from choosing a location to explore, selecting teammates, planning the trip, winterizing a travel vehicle, gear selection, travel skills and navigation, making camp, food and nutrition, dealing with winter safety concerns, and even camping with children.

Available from Amazon (paperback) for \$13.

Book – NOLS Winter Camping



From the National Outdoor Leadership School, the leader in wilderness education, comes the definitive guide on winter camping--based on the official NOLS curriculum, it's the next best thing to taking a course with a qualified instructor. You'll learn how to layer clothing to stay warm and dry, how to maneuver a pack sled through heavy snow cover, and how to sleep comfortably in conditions of extreme cold. Additionally, sections on avalanche safety and first aid provide essential preparation should disaster strike. Illustrated throughout with detailed line drawings.

Paperback is about \$15, Kindle version \$10. 4.4 out of 5 stars from Amazon.

Winter Camping Tips and Tricks to Help You Enjoy the Fourth Season



There's nothing like camping in cold weather. The bugs are gone, and campsites that were crowded in summer are largely yours alone. And if there's snow, new adventures beckon: Ski or snowshoe a trail; follow animal tracks; sleep in a snow trench or quinzee hut.

Winter camping is wonderful — that is, if you know what you're doing. The dangers are dehydration, hypothermia and frostbite. Before you set out, read this *Scouting* magazine article: <http://scoutingmagazine.org/2015/12/winter-camping-tips/>

Test Your Knowledge of Winter Camping with this Quiz



Try this simple 10 question quiz to see how well you would manage winter camping: <http://scoutingmagazine.org/2012/12/a-quiz-to-test-your-knowledge-of-winter-camping/>

High Adventure

Northern Tier - Individual Registration Options



Lone Voyager: Want to attend Northern Tier but your Troop or Venturing crew can't make it this year? No problem. The Lone Voyager program allows Boy Scouts (at least 14 years of age) and Venturers to attend Northern Tier as part of a provisional crew.

www.ntier.org/About/Summer%20Canoe%20Trips/IndividualPrograms.aspx

Help Your Units Plan Their High-Adventure Trips with New Videos



Are your council's units still trying to figure out where to head for some high-adventure action and excitement? Check out these new promotional videos from our high-adventure bases at Philmont, Northern Tier, Sea Base, and the Summit ... and start planning!

- Northern Tier – www.youtube.com/watch?v=bNQ6s29TrJs
- Philmont – www.youtube.com/watch?v=1_-Dn32Vx4
- Sea Base – www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zo6YTI6dfUU
- The Summit - www.youtube.com/watch?v=kF-cN_ufAmk&feature=youtu.be

Lose Yourself (And Find Yourself) in the Philmont Photo Archive



Want to go back to Philmont? Step into the time machine. Philmont Scout Ranch has opened its vast archive of participant and staff photos to the public.

That means if you've participated in a Philmont program in the past quarter-century — cavalcade, traditional crew expedition, individual trek, Philmont Training Center or Philmont staff — your photo's on there.

Viewing watermarked photos in the Philmont photo archive is free; buying a print or a high-res digital version will cost you \$10 or \$15, respectively. The Philmont photo archive includes 2014 photos and goes back to 1988. Philmont says it's working backward at a rate of about five summers per year.

So if you went to Philmont any time between 1965 (the year Philmont began saving participant and staff photo negatives) and 1987, be patient. Your photo will show up soon.

Philmont, which went all-digital with its participant and staff photos beginning in 2007, has scanned more than 100,000 photo negatives so far.

To find yours, check out the Philmont photo archive:

<http://philmontscoutranch.org/Museums/PhotoArchive.aspx>

No Crew? No Problem with Philmont's Individual Programs



Pretty much everyone knows about Philmont's epic treks. You form a crew of seven to 12 people and hike Philmont's challenging and exciting backcountry. They're so popular there's often a waiting list to snag a spot.

Fewer people, though, know about Philmont individual programs. These are perfect for a young man or young woman who wants to experience Philmont as an individual or with a smaller group. And good news: 2015 spaces are available.

Don't worry parents. "Individual" doesn't refer to teenagers hiking around Philmont Scout Ranch alone. All programs at Philmont are crew experiences, but individual trek crews are formed by Philmont from applicants spread across the nation.

Most of the participants of these 12- to 21-day individual treks develop lifelong friendships with people from across the country. And participation in these programs typically gives people a leg up if they choose to apply for Philmont seasonal employment down the road.

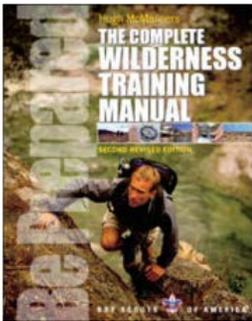
To see what treks are available go to:

www.philmontscoutranch.org/individual.aspx

For the individual program brochure:

www.philmontscoutranch.org/filestore/philmont/pdf/IndividualProgramsBro.pdf

Complete Wilderness Training Manual



The official Boy Scouts of America guide to mastering outdoor skills and staying alive in challenging environments, *Complete Wilderness Training Manual* enables everyone—expert and novice alike—to answer the call of the wild with confidence. From constructing emergency shelters and testing plants for poison to making a compass and splinting a broken arm, this fully-illustrated guide will teach you everything you need to know about staying alive in any environment.

This book covers a lot of needed areas for living in the wilderness: where to find water (natural water sources), preventing water loss for the body, effects of water loss, natural food sources, poisonous plants to avoid, different types of shelters you can build (with helpful detailed diagrams and step-by-step directions and pictures), finding direction, using maps and different kinds of navigational techniques. This book is perfect those that love wilderness adventure and especially if they're looking to do this for a great length of time. The book covers everything from how to pick a good campsite to first aid care. There is even a section on surviving at sea so this book really covers just about every environment you might find yourself in. This book is full of all kinds of helpful information and the book is not too heavy so it's easy to carry along with you without adding a lot of extra weight.

High Adventure Myths and Facts



excerpted from www.ScoutmasterCG.com, April 22, 2011

Conversations of high adventure trips usually center on the B.S.A's popular and heavily promoted big three – Philmont, Seabase and Northern Tier. Council high adventure programs usually focus on putting crews together for trips to these three destinations but there are hundreds (if not thousands) of other places for Scouts to experience a high adventure trip. With a little ingenuity, planning and vision every Scout can participate in a high adventure trip.

MYTH

High Adventure trips must happen at a high adventure base or as part of an 'official' program

FACT

High adventure can happen anywhere! State and National Parks offer great places for hiking, backpacking, climbing, canoeing, and kayaking.

MYTH

High Adventure only happens in distant, exotic places.

FACT

High Adventure is not a place, it's a state of mind, a challenge beyond our normal weekend camping trips. High Adventure is about who you go with and what you do, not where you go!

Philmont may be a great location but it's not high adventure without the right mindset and the right participants. Four or five days backpacking hours rather than days from home can be as exciting, adventurous and rewarding. The most important location for high adventure is between your ears!

MYTH

To lead a High Adventure Trip I have to become a highly trained expert.

FACT

You do not have to be an expert to lead a High Adventure Trip but you'll need some important training (Weather, Safety, First Aid, etc.). You'll also need plan your trip to be slightly below your estimated skill level. High Adventure does not need to be dangerous to be challenging. Rely on the experience of others to educate yourself- talk to them, read their books, practice your skills.

MYTH

High Adventure trips are dangerous and risky.

FACT

The most dangerous part of your trip (statistically at least) will be driving to the location you choose. Risk must be carefully assessed and proper steps taken to assure everyone's safety.

MYTH

High Adventure trips require expensive equipment.

FACT

Some trips (like canoeing or kayaking) do require expensive equipment but this equipment is commonly offered for rent in the locations they are likely to be used. Backpacking is a great low-cost option. Equipment manufacturers have done a good job of equating comfort and safety with expense but this is only partially true. A little research will reveal viable, inexpensive alternatives to high-priced gear.

Stay closer to home, plan a challenging but attainable outing, make reasonable choices about gear and you can have a great High Adventure trip. You may find that a trip like this could be the catalyst that motivates your Scouts to work towards planning and financing more ambitious trips next year.

High Adventure is a great program builder and a fantastic opportunity for your Scouts! Don't let these common misconceptions make you reluctant to give it a go

Northern Tier - OKPIK



OKPIK Cold Weather Camping, Northern Tier's winter offering, is the BSA's premier winter camping program. At OKPIK, Scouts experience a true Northwoods winter: learning how to thrive in subzero temperatures, travel across frozen wilderness lakes and construct their own sleeping structures out of snow. All trips are fully outfitted and provisioned, including almost all of the personal gear necessary to stay warm in the winter. A highly trained staff member, called an Interpreter, accompanies all crews on their trek.

The Individual program allows Boy Scouts and Venturers to attend Northern Tier as part of a provisional crew. Offered out of the Charles L. Sommers Wilderness Canoe Base near Ely MN, there are 4 programs to choose from. All participants must be at least age 14 or age 13 and currently in 8th grade at the time of their trip.

Musher Camp

Stay in a heated cabin on base, and take the dogs out for half-day and day-long runs. Take ownership of a team of dogs and learn to feed, house, harness and otherwise care for them.

Dog Sled Trek

Head out into the wilderness with the dog teams and camp with the dogs out on the ice. Take ownership of a team of dogs and learn to feed, house, harness and otherwise care for them.

OKPIK Sampler

Learn the basics of winter camping. Crews will pack their gear onto sleds (or "pulks") and head out into the wilderness, spending their nights camping on the snow and ice. Scouts will learn how to set up a winter campsite, how to build snow shelters and how to cook meals at low temperatures. In addition, they will get to try out a full array of winter activities.

Cold Weather Leader Training

Cold Weather Leader Training is also an individual option for those who want to learn how to run a great Cold Weather Program back home!

ROCS, TCT and STEM Treks at Philmont



Three of Philmont's individual programs — Roving Outdoor Conservation School (ROCS), Trail Crew Trek (TCT) and STEM Treks — give young men and women a once-in-a-lifetime experience at one of the greatest places on earth.

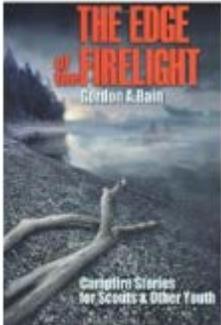
ROCS is a three-week program that offers a hands-on environmental science experience in the coolest outdoor laboratory ever. TCT is a 14-day educational program focused on conservation and leadership development. STEM Trek is a 12-day hands-on look at the science, technology, engineering and math behind Philmont's past, present and future.

For more information about these go to

<http://blog.scoutingmagazine.org/2016/02/22/rocs-tct-stem-at-philmont/>

Campfires

Book – The Edge of the Firelight – Campfire Stories



Wisconsin Scoutmaster Gordon Bain authored this collection of eleven campfire stories for his Scouts. Imagine hunkering around the fire and hearing a very credible account of someone you know, or a place you have been. Just enough factual information to draw you in, but with an eerie twist that raises the hair on the back of your neck.

Titles like *The Missing Bugler*, and *The Demon Troop* are evidence that Bain has woven plenty Scouting into his writing making *The Edge of the Firelight* much more than just another collection of generic ghost stories.

The Edge of the Firelight will give you plenty of material for introducing your Scouts to the grand old tradition of storytelling around the campfire. (Of course everyone knows if you point the toes of your shoes to the north at night you'll never have a bad dream, now – where did I put my compass?)

Available from Amazon in paperback (\$9) and Kindle (\$8). Only one review so far but the customer did give it 5 stars.

Book – Mac King's Campfire Magic



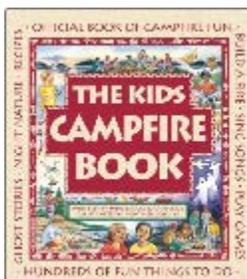
When a magic book starts with a foreword by Las Vegas headlining illusionists Penn & Teller, how can you go wrong? This book's subtitle says it all: "50 Amazing, Easy-to-Learn Tricks and Mind-Blowing Stunts Using Cards, String, Pencils, and Other Stuff from Your Knapsack."

These are perfect-for-the-campfire magic tricks with Scouting in mind. So get ready to amaze your friends and astound your family using only this book, your newfound "magical powers", and simple, everyday objects.

Master magician Mac King reveals the secrets behind 50 jaw-dropping illusions, each one accompanied by hilarious instructions and step-by-step illustrations. Anyone can perform them... whether at the campsite or stranded in the great indoors!

Perfect for readers aged 8-12 (grades 4-8). Soft cover, 176 pages. Available from ScoutStuff.org for \$12.95: www.scoutstuff.org/book-campfire-magic.html

Book – The Kids Campfire Book: Official Book of Campfire Fun (Family Fun)



This book in the Family Fun series has everything you need to know about having a fun and safe campfire. This collection of outdoor activities, games, stories, songs and more is for kids and families to share around the campfire. It includes tips on how to find the best campfire site, identify animal cries at night and locate constellations. Kids will also find out how to make pizza over an open fire, tell a spooky ghost story, or create musical instruments for a sing-along.

Available in paperback for around \$14, this has received 4.7 out of 5 stars on Amazon.com

Hiking

General

Online Resource – 50miler.com

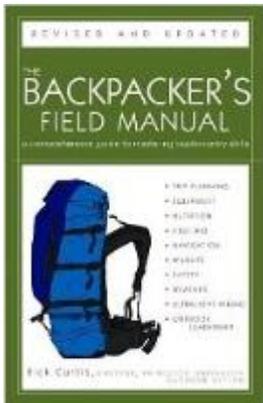


The goal of the <http://50miler.com> website is to make it easier for Scouts and Scouters to plan and conduct fun outings, especially Venture Crew activities. There are some recommended locations, some useful links, and some practical advice on the best ways make the experience as enjoyable as possible. Please add your own comments whenever possible.

The high-adventure parts of Scouting are critical in the development of successful young men. Their belief is that Scout backpacking is different than other backpacking because it fosters camaraderie and leadership within the Troop and the Patrol – not just from the hike, but also because of all the time the groups spends together getting ready for the actual 50 miler. Scout backpacking and other high-adventure activities provide an opportunity for life-changing learning experiences – it is fun and challenging at the same time. Every Scout should complete at least one 50-miler or go to Philmont before they are a serious Eagle candidate.

While at the site Request your own copy of the “Backpacking for Boys” manual (free to Scout leaders). It contains Checklists, “Trail Tips”, pictures and useful references for a fun (and safe) wilderness backpacking adventure. Topics include trail leadership, physical conditioning, planning the hike, what to pack, how to buy equipment, taking care of your feet, navigation, wilderness first aid, setting up a campsite, and ideas for fine dining at any altitude.

Book – The Backpacker’s Field Manual



When it was first published in 1998, The Backpacker's Field Manual by Rick Curtis set the standard for comprehensive backpacking books. Updated to offer a more complete view of backpacking today, it covers the latest developments in gear—such as Global Positioning Systems and ultralight hiking equipment—first aid, and Leave No Trace camping, and includes a chapter devoted to outdoor leadership resources and basics. Beginners and experienced hikers alike will find this book indispensable for trip planning strategies and also as a quick reference on the trail for:

BACKCOUNTRY SKILLS—how to forecast the weather, identify trees, bear-proof your campsite, wrap an injured ankle, and more--illustrated with more than 100 line drawings.

TRICKS OF THE TRAIL—time-tested practical lessons learned along the way

GOING ULTRALIGHT—downsizing suggestions for those who want to lighten up

Available from Amazon, \$17 (paperback) ★★★★★

Online Resource – AllTrails.com

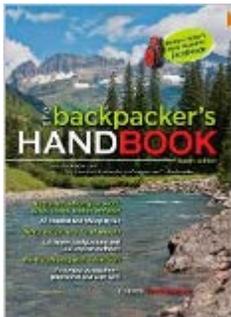


www.alltrails.com/ is a great resource for researching and sharing outing information. AllTrails is free and useful for a variety of trips – including road trips, sight-seeing tours, sailing trips, hiking, cycling, flying, hang gliding, geocaching, skiing, kayaking trips and more. AllTrails has trips from over 80 countries in all corners of the world.

Users can download GPS information and create trips that others can use to plan their own outings. Tracks and maps can be annotated with trail descriptions and photos.

iPhone and Android smart phone apps are available to map your trip route while you move, add trip photos and videos to your map instantly, share trips right from your phone, and find and follow trips from other travelers.

Book – The Backpacker's Handbook, 4th Edition



Whether you are backpacking for the first time or a veteran follower of the trails, this enormously practical guide includes everything you need to know, from essential techniques such as map and compass work to the skills needed for more remote wilderness journeys. *The Backpacker's Handbook* by Chris Townsend also gives you the latest information on gear. You'll find the last word on:

- How to choose packs and footwear—and make sure they fit
- What clothing to take on the trail
- Tents, tarps, stoves, water purifiers, and other gear
- GPS, cell phones, and other electronic devices

Night Hike



When's the last time you went on a night hike, without flashlights? Nighttime is a great opportunity to learn about wildlife, to conquer fear of the dark, and to understand how our eyes work. Night hikes build important outdoor skills and hone your powers of observation. When one of the five senses is diminished the other senses compensate for the loss. During a night hike, sight (the sense most heavily relied on to orient ourselves) is reduced. A diminished sense of sight is disorienting so we will compensate by using hearing and touch.

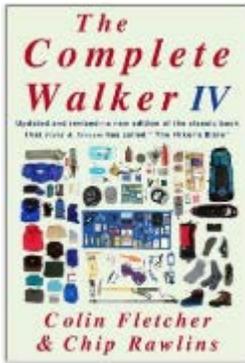
- Scoutmaster Clarke Green has prepared an outline to using in preparing for a night hike with some experiments/activities to go along with it:
<http://scoutmastercg.com/night-hike/>

Online Resource – WildBackpacker.com



www.WildBackpacker.com has all the backpacking knowledge you could want in one easy place. Find trail guides, gear guidelines, backpacking recipes, food articles, survival tips, and other backpacking and hiking information.

Book – The Complete Walker IV



The eighteen years since the publication of *The Complete Walker III* have seen revolutionary changes in hiking and camping equipment: developments in waterproofing technology, smaller and more durable stoves, lighter boots, more manageable tents, and a wider array of food options. The equipment recommendations are therefore not merely revised and tweaked, but completely revamped. During these two decades we have also seen a deepening of environmental consciousness. Not only has backpacking become more popular, but a whole ethic of responsible outdoorsmanship has emerged. In this book the authors confidently lead us through these technological, ethical, and spiritual changes.

Fletcher and Rawlins's thorough appraisal and recommendation of equipment begins with a "Ground Plan," a discussion of general hiking preparedness. How much to bring? What are the ideal clothes, food, boots, and tents for your trip? They evaluate each of these variables in detail—including open, honest critiques and endorsements of brand-name equipment. Their equipment searches are exhaustive; they talk in detail about everything from socks to freeze-dried trail curries.

They end as they began, with a philosophical and literary disquisition on the reasons to walk, capped off with a delightful collection of quotes about walking and the outdoor life. After a thoughtful and painstaking analysis of hiking gear from hats to boots, from longjohns to tent flaps, they remind us that ultimately hiking is about the experience of being outdoors and seeing the green world anew.

12 Thru-Hikes That Aren't the AT, the PCT, or the CDT

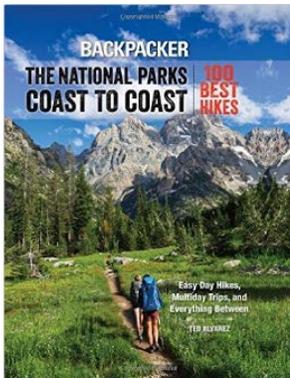


While every-one in the adventure world has heard of the thru-hikes that make up the coveted Triple Crown of Hiking—the Appalachian Trail, the Pacific Crest Trail, and the Continental Divide Trail—there is a handful of thru-hiking trails across the United States that are in need attention too. Many of the trails are much shorter, some are longer, but each offers a unique challenge, landscape, and opportunity to connect with nature. Most have multiple access points that allow for short day hikes or weekends.

For a listing of these trails go to

www.theclymb.com/stories/passions/explore/12-thru-hikes-arent-pct-cdt/

Backpacker The National Parks Coast to Coast: 100 Best Hikes



Three great things about hiking in a national park: fresh air and your own two feet. Now a new book from *Backpacker* magazine can guide you to finding the best trails.

Backpacker: The National Parks Coast to Coast: 100 Best Hikes, a new book by Ted Alvarez, the magazine's Northwest editor, offers park-specific visiting tips and detailed hike profiles. Explore the crystal clear waters on the Summit Lakes Trail at Lassen Volcanic National Park, take in the expansive views at Shenandoah National Park's Old Rag Mountain, or traverse the sandstone cliffs at Angel's Landing in Zion National Park. Choose your adventure from any of the forty-four national parks profiled throughout the book. This book delivers jaw-dropping photos, detailed hike descriptions and maps, ranger essays, and more, all of which combine to create an intimate look at the best our national parks have to offer.

Man Food: 5 Homemade Snacks for Hiking



The flowers are out, the birds are chirping, and the air is warm (but not too warm). Spring may just be the perfect season for hiking. And if you're planning on getting out and enjoying the great outdoors, you're going to need some nourishment, which means packing both snacks and water.

"Your food and water needs are generally higher than usual on activity-based excursions," Jackie Newgent, a registered dietitian, wrote in an article for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Dehydration can happen even on low-key day hikes, so in addition to drinking plenty of water before you head out, you'll want to have at least 2 cups of water for every 1 hour of hiking, Newgent advised.

As far as food, "opt mainly for non-perishable foods that are relatively lightweight and nutrient dense," Newgent suggested. Old standbys like nuts, energy bars, and trail mix are all good bets. But that doesn't mean you have to settle for yet another handful of GORP (good old raisins and peanuts) when you get hungry while hiking. Here are five more creative recipes for healthy snacks for while enjoying the great outdoors: www.cheatsheet.com/culture/man-food-5-homemade-snacks-for-hiking.html/

Online Resource – Hillmap.com



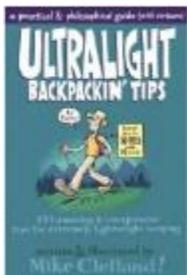
www.Hillmap.com is a free and powerful mapping website that allows you to create & print high-quality topo maps, share your maps and trails with your trip partners, calculate slope, check the weather & snowpack and upload & download gpx files among other tools.

The hillmap webpage opens with a split screen of two maps (a topo map right beside a satellite view at the same scale), and a header that opens up a variety of tools you can use to customize a map, analyze terrain and derive more information about your trip.

Activate the Points tab and click the map to measure the elevation, location and slope at a point anywhere in the world. Links to a weather.gov forecast for the point and a peakfinder.org panoramic display of visible named peaks will also appear. Use the Paths tab to construct and measure a route or trail.

Ultralight Backpacking

Book – Ultralight Backpackin' Tips



There's a lot to recommend ultra-lightweight backpacking. Travelling light involves reconciling weight, safety, comfort and cost and Mike Clelland's book is a good resource to get you thinking. *Ultralight Backpackin' Tips* is a list of 153 hints the author offers to help guide you towards a lighter pack and the methods that make this possible. Clelland illustrates the book with his own ultra-witty cartoons. The first ten tips are the 'manifesto' of ultra-lightweight backpacking.

Available from Amazon for \$11 (paperback).

And much more

Online Resource – HikeLight.com



www.Hikelight.com is has a wealth of advice for trimming down your backpack weight with over 80 videos that help explain ultralight backpacking.

The website is home to the **Only The Lightest Camping Equipment** mail order store. Ultralight is not ultra-cheap; you won't find any \$20.00 sleeping bags. You will find some of the best gear options available and a careful explanation of why it's the best available.

How Light Can Your Backpack Be?

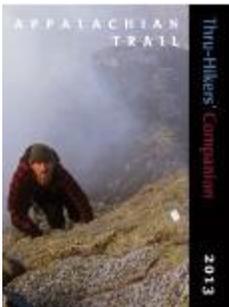


If you're going to Philmont or doing some other high adventure hiking you may want to check out the following article by Doug Prosser on reducing your backpack weight:

www.backpackinglight.com/cgi-bin/backpackinglight/philmont.html

Appalachian Trail

Book – Appalachian Trail Thru-Hikers' Companion 2013



The leader for two decades in specialized guides for Appalachian Trail thru-hikers, section-hikers, and dreamers with the 2,186-mile national scenic trail in their eyes! Forty-some volunteers from the only organized A.T. users' group (the Appalachian Long Distance Hikers Association) each fall team up with the Appalachian Trail Conservancy to compile the latest information on Trail features and offerings in nearby towns. That provides the basic information would-be thru-hikers need to craft their own adventures to define their walks of a lifetime. The Companion, with mileage tables and town maps, is divided by state in south-to-north order, with a plethora of telephone numbers and Web sites to tap along the way.

Available from Amazon for about \$9 (paperback).

Online Resource – SectionHiker.com



Philip Werner is the author of Section Hiker (<http://SectionHiker.com>). He started the site in 2008 to learn about blogging and discovered that he liked writing and conversing with his readers almost as much as he liked hiking and backpacking. He can't hike everyday, but he can write, so he indulges himself by posting frequent articles here.

The name of this site, Section Hiker, refers to the Appalachian Trail which he has been hiking section by section since 2007. The site contains articles on gear reviews, the Appalachian Trail, the Long Trail (VT - Canada), gear makers, and a lot backpacking hints.

Online Resource – The WhiteBlaze Network

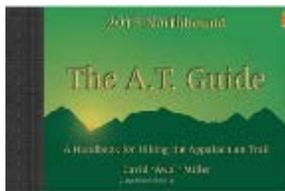


The WhiteBlaze Network (<http://www.whiteblaze.net>) was created by a community of Appalachian Trail enthusiasts. Its intended purpose is to provide a forum for free exchange of ideas about the Appalachian Trail including its history, supporting the trail, hiking the trail, and general issues important to those that enjoy the Appalachian Trail.

This site is not about any one person or their idea of what the Appalachian Trail should be or to dictate to you (the hiker) how the trail is supposed to be used. We leave that for you to decide. Interact with the other members to get a better idea of what others on the trail are thinking and maybe you will get a better idea of what it is all about.

If you have any questions, don't look for an administrator with all the answers, even about how to run this site. Instead, come in and ask the members. Become a member, and you are equally as important as the rest of us.

Book – The A.T. Guide 2013



The *A.T. Guide* is the guidebook of choice for hikes of any length on the Appalachian Trail. The book contains thousands of landmarks such as campsites, water sources, summits and gaps. The trail's elevation profile is included and every landmark is aligned to the profile. Hikers using this guide know where they are on the trail, what views, streams and campsites are ahead, and whether they'll be hiking uphill or downhill to get there.

The *A.T. Guide* is the most innovative trail guidebook ever developed; The Thru-Hiker's Handbook had a long history of providing precise and detailed trail information. This edition combines the best of both books into one exceptional offering.

Features include:

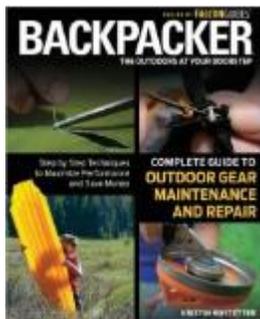
- Mileages to landmarks north-to-south and south-to-north
- Elevation profile map for the entire trail
- Town maps.
- Mileages from all shelters to the next three shelters in each direction.
- GPS navigation coordinates for over 200 parking areas.
- Icons for easy identification of landmarks and services.

Available from Amazon in paperback, about \$13.25. Customer reviews give it a 4.7 out of 5 stars.

Equipment & Gear

General

Book – Camping Gear and Maintenance



Backpacker Magazine's *Complete Guide to Outdoor Gear Maintenance and Repair* is your ticket to becoming a camping gear repair guru. Author Kirstin Hostetter's well-illustrated, carefully explained directions return your investment with the first piece of damaged gear you save.

Maintaining and repairing modern clothing, sleeping bags, backpacks, stoves and tents is not as simple as slapping on a bit of duct-tape. You are much more likely to find siliconized nylon, GoreTex titanium and Fastex buckles rather than canvas, brass or leather in a Scout campsite these days. Duct-tape repairs are, at best, a temporary solution and they may cause even more damage in some instances. Tossing your GoreTex jacket or down sleeping bag in the washer is tantamount to tossing it into the trash.

Scouts are pretty hard on gear and a well-stocked repair kit and (perhaps more importantly) knowing how to use it can save a camping trip. If you wake up in the middle of the first night of a week-long backpacking trip to find your inflatable sleeping pad as flat as a pancake, or put a good-sized hole in your tent, or break the zipper of your rain jacket you'll be happy you invested the time reading the guide and put together a good repair kit.

There's one gear problem particular to Scouting nobody can fix (nor would we want to); our Scouts outgrow more things than they wear out!

Available from Amazon, \$12.50 (paperback).

Online Resource – Outdoor Gear Lab



Have you ever wanted to buy an outdoor product and been stumped about which product is best? Or, worse, bought a product only to learn later that you didn't buy the right one for your needs? The OutdoorGearLab (www.OutdoorGearLab.com) mission is simple: to create world's best outdoor gear reviews.

They believe the world's best outdoor gear reviews are the ones that help you select the right products for your specific needs, budget, and interests.

Their review process starts with selection: looking at hundreds of products to determine the top contenders in each category. To provide a fair basis for scoring, they have a set of objective lab tests for each category that helps quantify important differences between competing products.

In addition, they put each product through a set of real world field tests where they use and abuse each product to see how it holds up to its competition. Many of their testers are professional outdoor guides who bring years of hands-on experience and backcountry wisdom to our reviews.

In the end, their mission is to help you find the best product for your situation, keeping in mind that each person's needs are unique. To achieve that goal they publish the scores of each product relative to its competition, both overall and across important attributes for each category. That means you can find the one that best meets your individual needs.

Online Resource – CoolTools



Cool Tools (<http://kk.org/cooltools/>) is a web site which recommends the best/cheapest tools available. Tools are defined broadly as anything that can be useful. This includes backpacking, camping, hand tools, machines, books, software, gadgets, websites, maps, and even ideas. All reviews are positive raves written by real users. They don't bother with negative reviews because their intent is to only offer the best.

One new tool is posted each weekday. Cool Tools does NOT sell anything. The site provides prices and convenient sources for readers to purchase items. When Amazon.com is listed as a source (which it often is because of its prices and convenience) Cool Tools receives a fractional fee from Amazon if items are purchased at Amazon on that visit.

Online Resource – The Wirecutter



The Wirecutter (<http://thewirecutter.com>) is a listing of the best gadgets—like cameras and TVs—for people who don't want to take a lot of time figuring out what to get. Most gear they choose isn't top-of-the-line models that are loaded up with junk features or overpriced; most of the ones picked are of the “great enough” variety, because this is generally where people's needs and the right prices smash into each other. They reference all the data they can find from their work and from around the web and build tests using whatever it takes to raise the bar on the subject, often employing engineers, physicists, chemists and other experts to work in a team.

Though *The Wirecutter* covers a number of categories including electronics, music, and cars they also have an Outdoor category appropriate to those looking for camping gear and accessories.

Online Resource - Boy's Life Gear Guide



Not sure which gear to buy? Need tips for maintaining your equipment? Check out the Guy Gear section of *Boys' Life* website

<http://boyslife.org/section/outdoors/guygear/> They have guides for buying:

- Backpack stoves
- Backing tents
- Backpacks
- Bikes
- Binoculars
- Compass & GPS
- Cookware
- Daypacks
- First aid kits
- Headlamps and flashlights
- Helmets
- Hiking boots
- Hydration systems
- Jackets and shells
- Mountain bikes
- Knives and Multitools
- Running shoes
- Skateboards
- Skis and snowboards
- Sleeping bags
- Sleeping gear
- Sports sandals
- Sunglasses
- Tents
- Two-way radios
- Watches
- Water treatment

Online Resource – GearInstitute



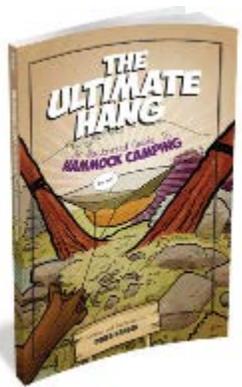
Gear Institute, www.GearInstitute.com, is an online network of outdoor gear testers in America, dedicated to providing consumers with the most credible, objective, and helpful gear reviews and advice on the web. Guides, product testers, and outdoor athletes put each product through extensive field testing against comparable products to provide gear buyers with clear, trustworthy, consumer-friendly comparisons of high-performance outdoor gear.

Their goal is to professionalize outdoor gear testing. They conduct fair, thorough, head-to-head tests of comparable outdoor products, both under controlled conditions and in appropriate real-world field-testing scenarios. They publish their testing criteria and open their methodology to discussion.

Above all, they strive to provide fair, objective, and credible product reviews to the buyers of outdoor gear. That means they will not be influenced in any way by advertisers, product representatives, or their own biases.

Tents/Shelters/Hammocks

Book – The Ultimate Hang



Derek Hansen, Scoutmaster, lightweight backpacker, and as his website says “hammock enthusiast”, has a book out called *The Ultimate Hang*. It is an illustrated guide to hammock camping and a book that even the most experienced hammock camper or backpacker should have on their shelf. The book takes the novice and experienced camper step by step to ensure a great hammock camping experience. Even if you are not a hammock camper, there is something in this book for you. How to select a good camp site. The “Bermuda Triangle” and an extensive discussion on tarps. The book is interactive with QR codes that lead to web sites for more information.

Available in paperback, and in digital editions for Kindle, Nook, and iTunes at <http://TheUltimateHang.com>

Online Resource – Hammock Camping



If you are looking for a place to discuss hammocks, hammock gear and hammock accessories to use for any hammock activity, then the place to look is Hammock Forums at www.HammockForums.net/.

Their discussions include such things as Do It Yourself projects on how to make hammock stands, home made hammocks, accessory gear for hammocks and much more. Once you have spent time in a hammock, you will never look at a bed or sleeping pad the same again..

SansBug Popup Shelter



Excerpt from <http://www.boyscouttrail.com/blog/1085.asp>

How bad will the mosquitos be at camp this summer? When was the last time that bunkhouse mattress was cleaned? Are there mice running around these floors at night?

Whenever a night is spent at scout camp, these sorts of questions might keep you awake. I've stayed in some pretty nasty places where I would have liked a little protection between me and the insects and vermin sharing the wilds with me. I know of a few young scouts just starting out that missed some great campouts because they were scared of the bugs.

A tent works fine, with mesh screen and floor, to keep the blood suckers at bay but most scout tents are 2, 3, or 4-person varieties. They take up a lot of space, weigh quite a bit, and are cumbersome. I know of a better idea for many situations.

I've just received a SansBug shelter to try out. It's a very cool automatic pop-up bug-free zone so campers can sleep in comfort! Besides being a small, light solution to the "can't sleep worrying about creepy crawlies" problem, it is a ton of fun to set up. All you do is Let Go - it pops itself open and you crawl right in.

The fine mesh of the SansBug lets breezes blow through but prevents bites, disease, and general pestering from all flying and crawling insects - that's mosquitos, spiders, ticks, bedbugs, and all their little friends. Not to mention snakes, scorpions, and lizards.

SansBug can be set up on a floor, tent platform, bunkbed, cot, or inflatable pad - wherever the scouts are spending the night. If your scouts stay in canvas tents at summer camp, the SansBug is a perfect replacement for the hanging mosquito netting you use now. Even if you are sleeping indoors, the SansBug keeps your tender skin completely isolated from whatever's out there.

At less than 2.5 pounds and folding into a flat 20-inch disc, it's very easy to pack - even one for every scout. People have used SansBug shelters in Thailand, Afghanistan, Haiti, and even Scout Camp! A church took 30 SansBug tents to sleep in on their mission trip to West Africa, for example.

Available from Amazon for around \$60, has 4.4 out of 5 stars with 76 reviews in.

12 Tips for Sustainable Hammock Camping



Campouts are at the heart of Scouting, and hammocks have become a popular way to sleep comfortably under the stars. In addition to being relaxing, hammocks are a lot of fun — especially when everyone in your patrol hangs their hammocks together.

But in popular camping areas, tying a hammock over and over, day after day, on the same trees can tear, rub and cut into the bark. This can cause short- and long-term damage to the tree and may result in complete hammock restrictions.

As we live the Outdoor Code, how can we be clean, considerate and conservation-minded in our outdoor manners? How might we apply the Leave No Trace principles to protect the environment when hammock camping?

Here are some tips that can help you hang sustainably:

1. Before you go, find out if it's OK to hang hammocks from trees in the area you will camp. Follow any posted rules.
2. Bring a portable hammock stand to areas without trees or where restrictions are in place.
3. Trees' size and bark quality vary. Always use wide webbing straps — between 1.5 and 2 inches — to minimize any damage to the tree.
4. If you'll be hammock camping on the same trees for a few days — like at a resident week-long summer camp — place a section of closed-cell foam between the strap and tree for added protection.
5. Make sure your webbing straps are long enough to fit the trees you will encounter. This will prevent you from resorting to rope or twine to close the gap.
6. It's easy to keep a site pristine by using a hammock. There is no need to remove rocks, twigs or pinecones, or to damage live trees and plants. Consider moving to a new set of trees before breaking branches or altering a site in any way.
7. Be sure to take down any hammock structures and leave a site as you found it. For example, dismantle a tripod hammock stand built from driftwood on a beach.
8. Remove hammocks when not in use. In some areas, deer and elk can get tangled in lines left suspended between trees.
9. In pristine areas, consider setting up your hammock out of view to respect other visitors.
10. If used, hang a floor mat off the ground during the day to avoid damaging the vegetation beneath.
11. Consider partnering with a campground to build and install permanent hammock stands to create a long-term, sustainable option for future events.
12. Be an advocate with others to share these tips with hammock users.

Placing the Groundcloth Inside the Tent



Old ideas die hard, and when it comes to camping, the hardest to die is that you should place a plastic groundcloth UNDER the floor of your tent. This is dead wrong, and akin to pitching the tent on a slab of concrete. Rainwater will flow between the impervious groundsheet and floor, pool there, and be pressure wicked by body weight into the sleeping compartment. And if any part of the groundcloth extends beyond the tent floor it essentially becomes a gutter that guarantees that there will be water underneath.

Most tent floor material is urethane coated nylon which begins to degrade every time you fold and roll the tent for storage or transport and friction against the ground will accelerate it. It begins to get microscopic cracks and pinholes. Pressure from your weight forces the water up through the (at one time) sealed floor and into the tent. It only takes a few pinholes to squirt a couple of gallons of water up into your sleeping bag.

Therefore the answer is simple: put the groundcloth inside! Be sure that the cloth is about 4 to 6 inches bigger on each edge so that it rises above the wall and floor seam. When it rains, so what if the tent floor gets wet. As long as there are no holes in the ground cloth you stay high and dry.

The idea to put the groundcloth under the tent started in the 1950's when few tents had floors. If you've ever pitched a floorless tent you know it isn't easy. Squaring the perimeter means moving and re-setting stakes. Campers didn't have the patience for this, so tent makers sewed in floors to make tents easier to pitch, not to keep out water. But any ground water that gets inside a floored tent stays there.

Also contrary to popular belief, a layer of plastic under your tent will not discourage tears or holes in the tent floor. Why? Because most holes develop like a "green stick break". Explanation: When you bend a green stick it compresses on the bottom and elongates on top. The break first occurs on the elongation (top) side. The waterproof coating is on the INSIDE of your tent floor. As a sharp stick begins to force its way upward through the coated nylon floor, the undersurface (non-coated side) of the nylon compresses and the upper surface (coated side) elongates. When the elongation becomes large enough, the top coating breaks and the stick pokes through the floor. To prevent this, beef up the elongation surface (top surface), not the compression side. An interior groundcloth does exactly that.

How to Repair a Tent Pole in a Pinch



From: <http://www.wideopenspaces.com/how-to-repair-a-tent-pole/>

Perhaps you've been there: you get to your perfect camping spot and you go to set up your tent but one of the poles is broken. You think, "wow, I thought this time I'd be able to sleep in a tent and not outside on a rock pillow. I was wrong." Well, instead of letting that broken pole beat you, conquer it and sleep comfortably with these tips.

Aluminum Repair Sleeve

These can be found at most outdoor and camping stores. It's a simple sleeve that can be wedged or taped into place over the broken section of a tent pole. It's a handy little tool to always have for camping in case you need it. It's a much easier and less expensive, however temporary, fix to a broken tent pole.

Tent Stakes

Stakes are a great tool to splint a broken pole. And think about it, somehow there are always leftover stakes even though you feel like you've staked down every piece of tent that touches the ground.

If something like a stake could save your pole, so could a screwdriver, Allen wrench, or really anything sturdy. The factor here is having tape or strong string to splint the pole with whatever you wish to use.

If it really comes down to it and you need a quick fix, try using a branch.

Shock Cord

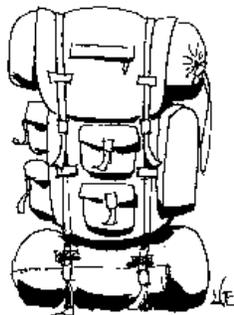
These are just a few ideas for repairing a broken pole on a tight budget or if you are out camping and can't get to an outdoor retail store. But what if the actual cord is broken?

If the shock cord inside the pole is broken or torn, here is an easy fix:

Find the two ends of the cord and feed them through the pieces of the pole and the ferrules (the smaller metal piece connecting the bigger pole sections) until they meet with equal tension on each side. If you have a couple of washers, place them through each end of the cord and tie a knot in the cord. This prevents the knot from slipping through the ferrules or pole pieces, as the washer holes are smaller and can provide tension to keep the knot strong. If you do not have washers, try to tie the knot as big as possible so it can sit between two pieces of the tent pole.

Backpacks

The Best Backpacking Backpack Review



OutDoorGearLab.com took eleven of the highest rated and most popular packs on the market and tested them side-by-side for over five months. They picked versatile packs that an average person would use on trips of two to eight days, but are also capable of going up to a twenty two day trips (yes, they used some of these packs on trips that long). The packs they tested were load 'em up and charge type packs, not to be confused with ultralight frameless packs. They tested these packs everywhere from week-long hikes on the Pacific Northwest coast to cold weather, high altitude mountaineering on Denali. Most importantly, they took them out on real world trips, lived out of them and took notes along the way.

To see their ratings, Price vs value chart, buying advice, and how they tested go to www.outdoorgearlab.com/Backpacks-Backpacking-Reviews

How to Fit a Backpack



If you routinely experience back pain, shoulder pain, or hip pain when you carry a backpack, there's a good chance that your backpack doesn't fit you or that you're not wearing it properly. This is surprisingly common among backpackers, and one of the main reasons why people don't go hiking more often.

The Biggest Mistakes that People Make

The number #1 reason why backpacks don't fit is because people buy packs with the wrong torso size. Before you buy a pack, measure your torso (www.rei.com/learn/expert-advice/backpacks-adjusting-fit.html). Backpacks with adjustable torso lengths can ameliorate this problem, but they are heavier.

The number #2 reason why backpacks don't fit is because the hip belt is too big or too small. Many manufacturers only make hipbelts in one size for their backpacks, and that size might not fit you. Come to terms with this and find a backpack that fits your waist, as it is today. Some manufacturers also offer replaceable hipbelts that can be switched out on backpacks, ensuring a perfect fit.

Don't be tempted to buy a pack because it's on sale, unless it fits your torso and hip size. Doing that is a mistake and you'll suffer needlessly for it.

For more information check out: <http://sectionhiker.com/how-to-fit-a-backpack/>

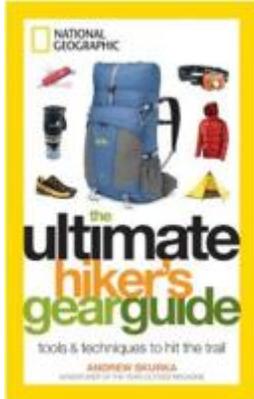
How to Pack a Backpack



When it comes to experiencing the outdoors, nothing beats backpacking. But carrying around all that gear on a trail isn't easy. Here a video from *Boy's Life* on some ways you can make it easier by packing the right way:

<http://boyslife.org/video-audio/136868/how-to-pack-a-backpack>

Book – The Ultimate Hiker's Gear Guide



Andrew Skurka's new book *The Ultimate Hiker's Gear Guide* will change the way how we sling a pack on our backs and hoof it into the wild. The first section of the book asks and answers the questions that many don't think to ask until they are out on the trail with too much and/or too little gear, blistered feet, and soaking wet with no hope of getting dry; why am I doing this? Skurka uses his first real backpacking experience (a through hike of the Appalachian trail!) to explain what you are getting yourself into. He offers direction and advice that, if heeded, will save readers a great deal of discomfort.

An extensive analysis of the construction, function and use of gear follows. Skurka explains why and how things ought to work in a way that makes choosing gear relatively painless. While he does mention of specific models and manufacturers he goes well beyond the model number. The final section of the book offers gear lists for several different environments.

Available from Amazon, \$13.50 paperback

Online Resource – HikingBackpackReviews.com



At www.hikingbackpackreviews.org we gather together only accurate information and personal experience to lay the foundation of solid and balanced reviews. Finding the best hiking backpack is a demanding task, particularly because there are plenty of brands and models out there, but not all of them might be appropriate for your particular needs. Our opinions are honest and, above all, helpful, discussing all aspects that are necessarily involved in the decision-making process.

We structure all hiking backpack reviews in a simple and easy-to-follow style that conveys information in comprehensive terms. We know that some people might not be actually familiarized with the terminology, but since we aim to make everything clear to you and provide you with the necessary information to make a good choice, we always make sure to write reviews that are visual and offer information in a simple manner. We cover a wide array of brands, including Kelty and Osprey, along with all their models, so that you can form an idea pertaining their quality, durability and other advantages & disadvantages of buying a specific one. With us, you will always make wise decisions that will enhance your hiking trips, making them more pleasurable than ever before.

The Backpack Cheat Sheet



Do you know what size pack you need for your next trip? Or, do you even know how to load your backpack? Perhaps you're wondering whether or not you should bring along the kitchen sink on your next backpacking trip?

Campmor got down and dirty, with some of their most experienced backpackers, and answered all of these questions and more, in a super easy-to-follow backpacking infographic: <http://outdoors.campmor.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/backpack-cheat-sheet-campmor.jpg>

Sleeping Bags/Pads/Liners

Sleeping Pads: How to Choose



Many campers, especially beginners, overlook the importance of a good backpacking sleeping pad. Even if you have the best sleeping bag in the world, you can still end up spending a miserable night under the stars if you lack a sleeping pad. Every good sleep system includes a sleeping pad. First, it provides another layer of insulation between you and the cold, hard ground. When you sleep on a sleeping bag only, your body weight crushes the insulation in the sleeping bag against the ground, making it much less effective. Also, sleeping pads are important because they provide cushioning. Let's face it—the ground is usually uncomfortable. The more comfortable you are, the better you will sleep—and the happier you'll wake up in the morning!

There are four types of backpacking sleeping pads on the market today, each with its pros and cons:

Backpacking air mattresses are small, thin inflatable mattresses. They are undeniably comfortable, but they have several drawbacks. The first is the possibility of leaks. Backpackers put their gear through a lot of stress, and even a durable air mattress can spring a leak. Backpacking air mattresses also do a poor job of insulating.

Closed-cell foam pads are the warmest type of backpacking sleeping pad available. They are also the least comfortable -- they provide very little in the way of cushioning. However, they are water-repellent, warm, light and may last forever. They are also cheap, so if you are on a budget, this is the sleeping pad for you.

As the name suggests, **open-cell foam pads** have open air cells. Because open air cells can squish further, they feel softer and have more "cushion", but as a result have to be either larger or heavier to compensate. Not so good for backpacking. Also, the open air cells absorb both water and allow some air circulation, meaning they are poor insulators in cold weather and worse than useless if the ground gets wet. They are also cheap.

Self-inflating pads combine the comfort of open-cell foam pads with the warmth and weather-resistance of closed-cell foam. A self-inflating pad consists of open-cell foam covered in waterproof, airtight material. They tend to be heavier than closed-cell foam and they are not as cheap as foam pads. Nonetheless, these pads are very popular and are probably the best choice for backpacking in terms of comfort and versatility.

Compare Specs and Features

Length: At a minimum, your shoulders and hips need to fit on a pad. Regular (typically 72" long) and long (from 75" to 78") pads will insulate your legs and feet—a big plus on chilly fall and winter trips. A short or 3/4-length pad (usually 47" or 48") weighs less and packs smaller.

Width: Nearly every pad offers a standard width of 20". If you tend to roll around a lot, you may want a width of 25" or 30". Tapered-shape pads reduce volume a bit and pack smaller. Also, consider the size of your tent to ensure you can fit 2 wider pads side by side.

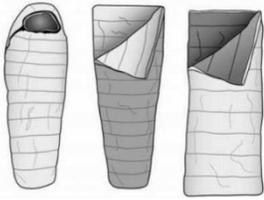
R-value: Insulation is measured according to its capacity to resist (that's the "R") heat flow. The higher a pad's R-value, the better you can expect it to insulate you from cold surfaces. Thicker pads generally offer higher R-values.

Two sites to look at for sleeping pad guidance are:

www.rei.com/learn/expert-advice/sleeping-pads.html

www.backpacking-guide.com/backpacking-sleeping-pads.html

Sleeping Bags: How to Choose



When choosing your sleeping bag, consider what time of year you're heading out camping and whether or not you're more susceptible to the cold. We'd recommend comparing different bags' season and comfort ratings, which can give you a great indication of when the bag should be used, and what sort of temperatures you will find most comfortable when sleeping.

Bags fall into three basic categories.

1. **Summer** - Suitable for temperatures of about 30°F and higher. They're lightweight (because less insulation means less weight), and they pack down tiny (often as small as a cantaloupe).
2. **Three-Season** - Ideal for temperatures of about 20°F and above, these bags are best suited for spring and fall trips, as well as summers in the high mountains when temps can dip below freezing at night.
3. **Winter** - These puffy cocoons, good for about 20°F and below, have all the features of a three- season bag (cinch-able hoods, draft collars, zipper draft tubes), but are beefed up with more insulation.

Sleeping Bag Temperature Rating and Insulation Type

All sleeping bags have temperature ratings, which indicate the minimum temperature that the bag is designed to handle. Temperature ratings should be taken with a grain of salt however, because as of now, there is no standard, universal method for determining ratings. A sleeping bag's temperature rating identifies the lowest temperature at which a bag is intended to keep the average sleeper warm. When a bag is described as a "20-degree bag," it means that most users should remain comfortable if the air temperature drops no lower than 20°F. These ratings assume that the sleeper is wearing a layer of long underwear and using a sleeping pad under the bag.

The key choice in sleeping bags is between synthetic fill or down. Down is lighter in terms of a weight-to-warmth ratio. Down is also more compact. However, only synthetic fills like PolarGuard 3D, Lite Loft, Hollofil, or Quallofil will maintain loft and warmth even when wet. Down turns into a heavy, soggy, cold mess that takes forever to dry out.

Bag Shapes

Bags come in several cuts and each shape is designed to appeal to a different type of camper.

Mummy - A tapered cut through the legs and feet give mummy bags maximum thermal efficiency. A bag's primary job is to contain the heat your body generates and when interior space is smaller, the bag is more efficient.

Rectangular - With no taper at all through the legs, rectangular bags are not as thermally efficient, and are best suited for backyard campouts and basement sleepovers.

Semi-rectangular - A happy medium between mummy and rectangular shapes, semi-rectangular bags are a good choice for campers who can't cope with the confinement of a mummy bag but need more warmth than a rectangular bag has to offer. They're bulkier and heavier than mummies, but give you a bit more thrashing room.

Some sites to look at for sleeping bag guidance are:

www.rei.com/learn/expert-advice/sleeping-bag.html

www.backpacker.com/gear/sleeping-bags/sleeping-bag-buying-guide/

www.dummies.com/how-to/content/choosing-a-sleeping-bag-for-camping.html

www.mountainwarehouse.com/expert-advice/sleeping-bag-guide/

Sleeping Bag Liner Should I Choose?



There are basically three reasons why you would want to use a sleeping bag liner:

1. **Protect your investment:** Using a liner will keep your bag cleaner, which will mean washing it less often. It's easy to come home from a backpacking trip and throw the liner into the washing machine (much easier than washing a sleeping bag). Your sleeping bag doesn't have to smell like a student dorm room, and the oils from your skin don't have to migrate into the insulation. There's another often overlooked aspect to keeping the sleeping bag clean, though. Fine-grain sand (which is famous for sticking to your feet when you're backpacking) can make its way through the sleeping bag fabric and act like sandpaper on the insulation. You pay good money for quality down or synthetic insulation – a liner is an inexpensive way of preventing this kind of damage.
2. **Change your sleep environment:** Using a liner in a sleeping bag will add warmth – even the silk or silk/cotton models trap an extra layer of air; the hollow-core Thermolite™ Reactors trap a lot more.
3. **Provide a hygienic sleeping environment:** A liner guarantees you a clean, hygienic sleeping environment wherever you are

Which liner is right for me? Here are some pointers:

- Silk Liners are the lightest and most compact; they wick moisture well and dry quickly. Ideal (in mummy form) for backpacking or (as a Traveler) for hostel/budget hotel use. Sea to Summit's Silk Liners are now equipped with an exclusive Comfort Stretch Panel – a stretch panel which runs the length of the side seam, and provides a greater level of comfort than has previously been possible in a silk liner. Also available as a double-wide version.
- Silk/Cotton Blend Liners are very light and compact, and are great for the same uses as pure silk liners. Their less-shiny surface makes them more suitable for active sleepers who might get tangled in a pure silk liner.
- Expander Liners are a good budget choice if you're less concerned with packed volume and weight, but their Jersey Knit construction means that they will stretch to almost twice their normal width. Expanders are knitted as a tube, so they do not have side seams (with the exception of the Mummy shape). They also feature an anti-microbial treatment, which keeps them fresh and odor-free. Great for Boy Scouts, for groups, and for car camping – they're also available as a double-wide version.
- Coolmax® Liners wick moisture well and dry quickly – ideal for hot, humid environments. They're also really stretchy – so if you've ever felt constricted in a liner, this is the liner to go for. Available in both a mummy shape and a rectangular Traveler version with a pillow slip, in both untreated and Insect Shield-treated versions.
- Thermolite Liners add warmth – perfect if your sleeping bag doesn't bring the promised performance, or if you're trying to add a season to your existing bag. Check out the blog post 'Adding warmth with a liner'. You can even use a Reactor as a stand-alone summer 'sleeping bag', although you'll need a bag cover of some kind to prevent heat loss due to moving air.

How to care for your liner: This is the easy part almost all liners are machine washable using standard laundry detergent. If you're using a top-loader machine, it's worth putting the liner in a pillowcase to stop the drawcord getting tangled in the impeller (the spiral plastic device at the center of the drum). Just make sure to keep fabric softeners away from your liner – the softener will reduce the wicking performance. Air-drying is best, there's no need to put a liner in a dryer.

Sleeping Bags 101



Scoutmaster Clarke Green (<http://scoutmastercg.com/sleeping-bags-101/>) has a one page PDF infographic on sleeping bag information that's ideal for beginners. He also has a listing of the sleeping bags he recommends for Scouts: <http://scoutmastercg.com/gear-guide-scouts-sleeping-bags-pads/>

There are about 40 other one page infographics that Clarke Green has developed, ranging from fire building to training to how to do a Blue card, that you might find useful: <http://scoutmastercg.com/scoutmastercg-pdf-package/>

Why Clean Your Sleeping Bag?



A sleeping bag that's dirty tends to mat and kill the insulation properties, especially for down bags. There are also different ways to clean down and synthetic bags. This site has some advice on how to wash, dry, and store your sleeping bag: www.rei.com/expertadvice/articles/caring+sleeping+bag.html

Sleeping Bag Storage



The best way to store your sleeping is by laying it flat. But most of us just do not have that kind of room in our house, so the next best method of storing your sleeping bag is by hanging it. This allows the air to circulate and keep the bag fresh as well as maintain the loft of the insulation. It does not matter if it is synthetic or down, the insulation once crushed will tend to stay that way over time. Crushed insulation will take longer to loft when needed and because synthetic fibers have memory, you will, over time lose much of the "R" value of your sleeping bag.

If you can not hang your gear, storing the bag in an over sized cotton bag is the way to go. An extra-large pillow case or bag like that will do. The point is get your bag out of the compression bag and let it air out and maintain its loft.

Remember, you paid a lot of hard-earned cash for that sleeping bag with the hope that it will be there for you when you want a nice comfortable sleep in the woods. Take care of it and it will take care of you.

Shoes & Socks

How to Try On Hiking Boots and Shoes



This article is by Lisa Maloney from www.HikingAbout.com (site no longer active).

I go into sticker shock every time I visit the shoe section of a sporting goods store. Really? They want me to pay more than \$100 for footwear that I'm buying with the express intention of abusing it until it falls apart? On the other hand, your hiking shoes or boots will be the foundation of your every experience on the trail. You can't get far without them, and an ill-fitting pair can subject you to a smorgasbord of agonies from blisters to frozen, cramped, or sweaty feet.

In other words, expensive hiking boots are worth the cost -- if they live up to their promises. Quality hiking footwear is sturdy enough to protect your feet as you hike for miles, sensitive enough that you can feel your connection to the trail, and comfortable enough that -- if sized properly and worn with the right socks -- you'll rarely, if ever, have to deal with blisters, damaged toenails, and other symptoms of poorly fitted shoes.

The bad news is that there's no single cookie-cutter answer to which hiking boots are best, and there's really no way to be sure which boots will fit you well when shopping online (although you can measure your feet at home). However, once you actually have the boots in your hands, a few quick tests will show if they're right for you. Here's how to get ready:

- Go shopping near the end of the day, when your feet are at their largest.
- Wear the same socks and pants you'd wear to go hiking. If you expect to wear a wide range of socks -- say, thin socks for summer hiking and thick woolen socks for winter hiking -- bring the thickest and thinnest socks with you.

Once you're at the store:

1. Ask a salesman or saleswoman to measure both of your feet. This will give you a starting point for boot sizes, and it'll tell you if one foot is larger than the other.
2. Lace up both boots, stand up, and wiggle your toes. Your big toes should be close to, but not touching, the front of the toebox. Ask a helper to press his or her thumb down over the front of the boots, just front of your big toe. As a general rule, if there's a full thumb's-width of space between your big toe and the front of the toebox, the boots are too big. (Remember, this assumes you're already wearing your hiking socks -- including thick, winter socks if you're planning on using them.) Also, the lighter-weight (and thus more flexible) the footwear, the closer the fit you can get away with.
3. Roll forward onto your toes, then back onto your heels. Do this a few times. If the boots really fit well, your heels won't move up and down inside the boot at all. The more your heels move, the more likely you are to get blisters when using those boots.
4. Walk uphill and downhill. If the boots fit right, your feet will stay securely positioned; if they don't fit right, your heels will move around in the boot as you walk uphill, and your toes will slide forward against the edge of the toebox as you go downhill.

Take a stroll around the store at varying speeds. If you feel any pinches, pokes, rubs, or "hot spots" of friction anywhere in either boot, it's not the right footwear for your trail adventures.

Socks



Socks are the most underrated — and most often ignored — piece of outdoor gear. A quality pair of socks might seem expensive at first, but it is worth its weight in gold and will make your time on the trail so much more enjoyable.

THE SOCK COMMANDMENTS

1. Thou shalt never wear cotton socks for hiking. They absorb sweat quickly and are very slow to dry. Soggy, sweaty feet = BLISTERS.
2. Thou shalt wear only socks made of wool or synthetic fibers ... or a blend of both. They will dry quickly, wick sweat away from your feet and keep your feet more comfortable on the trail.
3. Thou shalt wear socks that fit. Make sure your socks fit snugly. If they're too big, they'll bunch up inside your boots or shoes and be uncomfortable and might cause blisters.
4. Thou shalt not dry your socks on a stick over the campfire. They might catch fire or melt. Instead, wring them out and lay them on a warm rock in the sun.
5. Thou shalt always pack three pairs of socks. That way, you have a pair to hike in, an extra pair for hiking when the other gets wet, and a clean, dry pair for sleeping.

MONEY-SAVING TIP

Here's a little secret: There's often sizing overlap between large kids' socks and small adult socks. They're essentially the same product and cover the same size feet, but the kids' versions are usually much cheaper. So check the company's sock sizing charts online, and when they fit, go with the cheaper kids' version.

NEOS Overshoes for Warm Feet When Standing in the Winter



“NEOS” stands for “New England Overshoes.” An overshoe is just what the name says: It's a shoe that goes over another shoe.

Actually, it's more like a boot. Simply put on your normal street shoe, then step into the overshoe, then close up the overshoe. (NEOS recommends that if you plan to wear boots inside your NEOS to purchase a size up for more room to accommodate the boots.) They come in insulated, non-insulated models and a number of reviews talk about how useful they were for camping and winter hikes.

Overshoes are a little bulky to wear since they wrap around your regular shoes and need enough opening to slip your shoes into, but from people's experience the bulkiness is not limiting and they are easy to tighten. They look and feel a bit like astronaut shoes. Of interest to the stand-in, NEOS add a little height to your body — about 1 inch.

Gaiters: How to Choose



Snow, water, dirt and pebbles have a way of sneaking into even the most waterproof of boots. To prevent this, put on some gaiters. Gaiters cover the vulnerable tops of your footwear to fully protect your feet from the elements.

The right pair of gaiters depends on the kinds of trips you have planned and the conditions you expect. The main types:

- **Trail gaiters:** These lightweight, breathable gaiters offer basic protection against rocks, grit and light rain while on mild-weather excursions.
- **Alpine gaiters:** These are designed for all-around hiking, snowshoeing, mountaineering and cross-country skiing. They offer added protection against rock abrasion and water.
- **Expedition gaiters:** These provide heavy-duty protection and add insulation for extended mountaineering trips in harsh conditions. Most feature a waterproof, breathable fabric for superior comfort and protection.
- **Women's gaiters:** While these can fall in any of the above categories, women's styles are typically shorter in height and have a bit more top girth to specifically accommodate a woman's calf.

Gaiter height depends on how much protection you need.

- **Low gaiters** are ankle high, about 8" to 12" tall. These are best for less-than-extreme conditions when you just need to keep trail debris and rain out of your boots.
- **Regular gaiters** are calf high, around 15" to 18" tall. These are designed for rugged conditions such as hiking through deep snow, wet brush or in bad weather.

Much like with outerwear, fabrics help define the level of gaiter performance you're going to get. Most gaiters feature a lower section that is abrasion-resistant to fend off scrapes and an upper section that is waterproof or highly water-resistant. Here's a breakdown of the most common fabric players:

- **Gore-Tex®:** This well-known laminate provides superior waterproof, windproof protection and breathability. It's ideal for tromping through wet or snowy conditions.
- **Cordura® nylon:** This super-rugged fabric is designed to withstand the abrasion of ice, rocks and the occasional nick of crampon points.
- **Coated nylon:** Basic gaiters are very light and are usually made with polyurethane-coated nylon. If a short day hike or fast-packing through talus, sand and wet brush is on your agenda, this type of fabric will work just fine.
- **Schoeller® fabrics:** This family of soft-shell fabrics offers flexibility and stretch as well as excellent weather protection

For more information on how to choose the best gaiter go to:

<http://www.outdoorgearlab.com/Gaiters-Reviews/Buying-Advice>

Rain Gear/Jackets

Types of Rain Gear to Keep You Dry



This time of the year can be a beautiful time to go hiking and/or camping. The air is cool and the trees and flowers are already in bloom. However, weather is also known for its unpredictability as well. One minute, you can experience unseasonably warm, dry weather, and the next it can turn cold and very, very wet.

If you are going to take advantage of the season to hike or camp, it is critical that you plan ahead to ensure you remain warm and dry, no matter what Mother Nature throws at you.

You'll want to pack lightweight (often packable) rain gear that can be easily carried or packed when not needed. Again, even though it may be raining at any given moment, conditions could change quickly... and you don't want to get stuck with heavy rain gear to carry, when it turns warm and sunny.

So take a look at this Campmor article that includes eight different types of lightweight rain gear that you can plan to include in your next outdoor excursion: <http://outdoors.campmor.com/8-types-of-rain-gear-to-keep-you-dry/#bid=DWjafvZsLI3>

[Editor Note: For those of you reading this in hard copy here's a brief listing of the 8 types of rain gear; but trust us, you WILL want to check out that link when the time is right; the list below doesn't do the author justice.

1. Shell (rain jacket)
2. Poncho
3. Pants
4. Gaiters
5. Hat
6. Trekking Umbrella
7. Boots
8. Pack Cover]

How to Buy a Hiking Rain Jacket



Buying a rain jacket for hiking and backpacking can be a very confusing process. If you look at the jackets that are available, it can be difficult to figure which ones are best suited for hiking and which are really made for skiing, mountaineering and climbing. Then there are the exaggerated claims that manufacturers make about the performance of their waterproof laminates: Gore-tex PacLite, Gore-tex Pro, HyVent, Breeze Dry-Tech, eVent, PreCip, Pertex Shield, Conduit, Elements, DryQ, Membrain Strata, H2No, and so on. There are so many that it's almost laughable when companies introduce new ones.

How Well Do You Know How to Stay Dry in the Rain



The best rain gear won't keep you dry if it's sized wrong, worn improperly or damaged through neglect. Take this quiz to see how much you know about staying dry in a storm: <http://scoutingmagazine.org/2014/12/well-know-stay-dry-rain/>

To see how to choose the best rain gear to stay dry in stormy weather check out <http://scoutingmagazine.org/2014/12/choose-best-rain-gear-stay-dry-stormy-weather/>

Ultralight Versatile Windbreaker



This review is from Cool Tools (<http://kk.org/cooltools>) reviewer Oliver Hulland: The Patagonia Houdini jacket has become an essential piece of kit that I take with me nearly any time I leave the house. Its main function is as a windbreaker, but the DWR-treated nylon fabric works well in light rain. With that being said, in a downpour the jacket will wet out. But because its so thin and light it dries astonishingly fast, especially when compared to my bigger, heavier, rain jacket that feel wet for hours.

The jacket weighs around 3-ounces, and packs into its own chest pocket forming a baseball-sized bag that takes up minimal room. The fabric, despite being ultralight, is tough enough to survive most branches and scrapes seen while hiking, and it has found a permanent place in my pack while camping.

Above all else, it is the versatility of the Houdini that really sings. In the spring, I only need a light base layer and the Houdini when I go out. If I get chilled I toss it on to cut the wind and stay warm. Alternately, it works beautifully in the summer after a hot day when the temp starts dropping, or when I need a bit of lightweight sun and wind protection at the beach.

There are no doubt cheaper wind breakers out there, but for my money the Patagonia Houdini provides an incredible bang for the buck. Not only does it work just as well in the spring as it does in the summer, but its so light I know I'll actually have it with me when I need it.

Available from Patagonia (www.patagonia.com) for around \$99.

For some advice of what features to look for in a hiking rain jacket and a listing of recommended ones check out this article by Joe from SectionHiker.com: <http://sectionhiker.com/how-to-buy-a-rain-jacket-for-hiking/>

Gloves & Hand Warmers

Tips to Buy Winter Gloves/Mittens



Choosing and buying winter gloves/mittens is that one decision which will help you keep yourself warm in the blistering winter. That's because your fingers and toes are the most sensitive parts when it comes to feeling cold. They get cold the fastest because heat escapes through them the fastest. It's only natural to want to protect them as much you can, to avoid going numb in the winter.

These articles will give you some tips for buying gloves/mittens. Go through them before you go shopping.

- www.buzzle.com/articles/winter-gloves-buying-tips-choose-the-right-pair-for-you.html
- www.rei.com/learn/expert-advice/snow-gloves-and-mittens--how-to-choose.html
- www.outdoorgearlab.com/Ski-Gloves-Reviews/Buying-Advice

Best Hand Warmers

This review is extracted from an article by Seamus Bellamy of www.TheWireCutter.com, Dec 2012.



Sometimes gloves aren't enough. That's when hand warmers come in. I tested several of the best reviewed kinds and models, and the \$16 Zippo Hand Warmer is the best hand warmer, because it's cheap, safe and provides enough heat to keep your hands warm for close to 24 hours before it needs to be refilled. A catalytic hand warmer is heated by the catalytic reaction of the hand warmer's platinum-coated filament burner head coming into contact with fumes from white gas lighter fluid. In order to start the catalytic reaction, just hold a flame to the burner head for roughly five to 10 seconds. The filaments in the burner will begin to glow (sometimes visibly, other times not so much) and produce heat. The burner will continue to generate heat from the catalytic reaction for as long as there are white gas fumes to fuel it.

The great thing about a catalytic hand warmer is that they're easy to use, and can run for up to 24 hours on a single charge of lighter fluid, which as any smoker will tell you, is just about the cheapest part of a nicotine habit. The bad bit about this style of hand warmer is the same as the good news about it: They run on white gas. So, it's a pain to refill one once their reservoir goes dry. But as these things can run for a full day at a time, you likely won't have to worry about refilling it until you get back out of the cold, so that's a minor complaint.

And the best catalytic hand warmer is the Zippo Hand Warmer because it's reasonably priced, easy to find, and cheap to use.

If you just want a cheap disposable hand warmer, you could still go with the air activated kind like those made by Grabber, which cost between 50 cents and \$1 apiece. They're way more portable than the Zippo Hand Warmer. My testing proved that compared to Little Hotties or Heat Factory branded warmers, the Grabbers ran for the longest, at just over six hours and thirty minutes. But none of the air activated warmers I tried came close to being as hot as the Zippo was, so the Zippo is my main choice even if a little more complicated to set up and use.

Naturally the BSA Policy on the Use of Chemical Fuels applies to any equipment using a chemical (whether liquid or solid) fuel during Scouting activities. That the policy specifically states:

An adult knowledgeable about chemical fuels and equipment should always supervise youth involved in the storage, handling, and use of chemical fuels and equipment.

And

1. *No flames in tents. This includes burning any solid, liquid, gel, or gas fuel; including tents or teepees that feature or support stoves or fires; and any chemical fueled equipment or catalytic heaters.*

Stoves

High Efficiency Wood Burning Stoves



High efficiency wood burning stoves have been around for many years but there's been a renaissance in wood burning stove technology over the past decade or so. This renaissance has its roots in engineering simple technology that can be used to conserve wood fuel in the developing world.

Half of the world's households and 80 percent of rural households in developing countries cook with solid fuels like wood, coal, crop residues and dung. Many of these households use traditional open fires or simple stoves that release smoke into the dwelling and do not make efficient use of the fuel.

With high efficiency stoves the key element is "gasification" or the creation of a secondary combustion zone that burns the gasses in wood smoke. This greatly increases efficiency and reduces. While earlier versions of these were often very heavy there are now backpacking versions.

The Case for Wood Burning Stoves

The advantages of Scouts using wood burning stoves over propane stoves or open campfires are many:

- Learning and using the skills of building, maintaining and cooking over a wood fire.
- Reducing environmental impact to nearly zero (wood fires are carbon neutral and very little fuel is required).
- No disposable propane cylinders eliminating the cost and the significant environmental impact associated with using them. Disposing of these cylinders are also a growing problem for parks and wilderness areas. As Scouts we really do have to consider the environmental impact of the propane cylinder itself. The energy embodied in the production and transportation of the cylinder (let alone the extraction, refinement and impact of the gas the fills the cylinder) make it an environmentally poor choice.

Cooking using a wood burning stove is faster than an open campfire, and a bit longer in comparison to a propane stove. A few extra minutes is an acceptable trade-off for the advantages gained. A good wood burning stove costs as much or more than a propane stove but that expense is offset by the savings on fuel and disposable cylinders.

Solo Stove Review



Review by Clarke Greene, Nov 2012, www.scoutmastercg.com/solo-stove-review/

Before I begin this Solo Stove review I need to explain that I think building a campfire is an important skill. It connects Scouts to many things, sharpens their ability to plan, and is almost always a group activity. I once thought that we ought to do all of our cooking over fires and not stoves, then I acquiesced to the idea that stoves were quicker and to the misapprehension that gas stoves were a responsible low-impact method (they aren't when you consider the impact of making and disposing of a gas canister). Now I am convinced we need to rethink using wood for fuel not only to sharpen our skills but to minimize our impact.

I started researching the subject several years ago. More than a third of the world's population cooks over wood and charcoal (about 2.5 billion people). Researchers have been quietly developing sustainable, easily adaptable technologies to improve the efficiency of burning wood for fuel. These ideas have been adapted for recreational camping with mixed success. I've tried lots of different ideas, built my own tin-can stoves, tested some commercial ones – all were disappointing in one way or another – until I was asked to test the Solo Stove – Eureka! This is it.

The double-walled Solo Stove is a “natural convection inverted down gas gasifier”. Air intake holes channel air to the bottom of the fire and direct warm air up between the walls creating a burst of preheated oxygen causing a secondary combustion of the gases (smoke) given off by the burning wood.

Follow that?

What it means is the stove turns the wood and gasses given off by the wood into a strong, concentrated, efficient flame that burns like a blowtorch! A generous handful of smallish sticks will boil 32 ounces of water in less than fifteen minutes.

When I unpacked the stove I could tell right away it was a quality product. Constructed of stainless steel and Nichrome wire it measures a compact 5.7 x 4.25 inches weighs only 9 ounces (that's less than the fuel canister for my MSR stove). I carried the stove on our most recent backpacking trip (it fits in my 2 quart pot) and was not only pleased but frankly amazed at how easy it was to light and use.

I collected a few small (pencil lead sized) twigs and broke some small sticks into small pieces lit a pea-sized chunk of sawdust and wax fire starter had a pot of boiling water ten minutes later. When I was done eating there were very few embers and ashes left in the stove (once the fire burned out the stove cooled off very quickly. I carefully dumped these on the ground, stomped them out cold and packed the stove up.

Available from Amazon, \$70. (4.25" diameter, 3.8" tall (nested) 5.7" tall (assembled); weighs only 9 oz)

Stoves? What you can use.



Excerpted from The Scoutmaster Minute, <http://thescoutmasterminute.net/2014/12/09/stoves-what-you-can-use/>

As with many other things in Scouting, some “rules” get made up as they go. Cell Phones? NO.. No electronics on Scouting Outings. Not written down anywhere from the BSA, but ask many Scouters and they will proclaim this as gospel.

Knives, same thing. Throw that subject out at a Round Table and you will get 50 different “policies” on what can and can not be used.

So, lets talk about stoves.

The official BSA policy is simple. As long as you did not make it, you can use it.

You can use alcohol, as long as you use denatured alcohol. You can use White gas, Diesel, kerosene, and solid fuel like the Esbit fuel tabs.

You can not make a pop can stove. In fact the policy says you can’t make your own stove period.

Fuels are to be used as intended and carried in a fuel container that is designed for that purpose. For example, if you are using Denatured Alcohol, you need to carry it in a fuel bottle. Putting your fuel in an old pop bottle or generic bottle is not authorized.

So the myth of Alcohol stoves being banned is just that.. a myth.

The myth that you can not use wood stoves.. just that... a myth.

Liquid fuel stoves too dangerous for Scouts and therefore banned.. a myth.

Allow the Scouts to seek adventure and try new things. When it comes to stoves, really there are not many restrictions other than making your own.

Here is what it comes down to. Training. You teach the Scout to use the Coleman two burner stove right? Then teach him to use an alcohol stove properly.

Teach him to use his MSR pocket rocket or Dragon fly the right way and it will serve it’s purpose without anyone getting hurt.

When the Scout is properly trained and trusted, he will do the right thing and have fun in his outdoor experience.

Technology and research have produced some really cool stoves. Let them try it.

J Falk Wood Burning stove

Posted Jan 30, 2014 by Jerry Schleining Jr., <http://thescoutmasterminute.net/author/thescoutmasterminute/>



For those of you looking to play around with other stoves for backpacking you know that I have played around with a couple different Wood gas or Wood burning stoves. I currently use the Solo Stove for wood burning, but I found this older video of my first shot at wood burning stoves. The J Falk Bushwhacker Stove is a nice stove that you should give a try. Whether you make one or buy one, they are fun little stoves to play around with. They are efficient and economical. The stoves are safe and easy to make or buy. We have used them to fulfill the “Cook over open fire” requirement also... so give it a shot. Here are the instructions for making your own Bushwhacker stove:

http://angrysparrow.com/misc_hosted/bushwhacker.pdf

Propane/Natural Gas Canister Disposal



Spring is in the air; time to start planning trips, sorting gear, and possibly, replacing old equipment. But what are you supposed to do with those old, empty (and partially full) gas canisters for your stove? It's not always as easy as tossing it into the trash. Here are some things to know when disposing of old gas canisters:

- Most fuel canisters are steel and can be recycled along with your Dr Pepper cans. Just burn off any residual fuel and puncture empty canisters before recycling. Crushing empty cans with big rocks seems to work well. **Note:** Make sure canister is completely empty before puncture!
- JetBoil has produced a tool called the "Crunchit" that simultaneously vents the remaining fuel and punctures the can for recycling. The "Crunchit" can be used with any fuel canister, not just JetBoil!
- Call your local Public Works Department and ask about rules in your area.
- Additionally, <http://earth911.com/> is a very useful website for finding disposal facilities in your area. Simply enter your location and search for "propane tanks", "fuel canisters", etc.

Remember, in the U.S., one person creates about 1,700 pounds of trash every year. So keeping just another item out of our landfills is one more step in the right direction

Water Filters

LifeStraw® Personal Water Filter



Designed to provide clean water in the harshest of conditions, the LifeStraw personal water filter provides outdoorsmen instant access to safe drinking water. Lightweight and compact, this 2 oz. filter allows you to drink directly from lakes, rivers, or your water bottle by simply putting the lower part of the straw in the water and sipping. Perfect for hunting, hiking, fishing, and other outdoor pursuits in backcountry, the LifeStraw filters up to 264 gallons (1,000 liters) of unwanted impurities down to to 0.2 microns. This powerful filtration captures dangerous bacteria and protozoa, exceeding EPA standards for water filtration. Distributed as part of many public health campaigns or emergency responses by NGOs and other relief organizations, the LifeStraw's simple and effective design has won numerous awards (including TIME Magazine's Best Inventions Award).

- Removes 99.9999% of waterborne bacteria (>LOG 6 reduction).
- Removes 99.9% of waterborne protozoan parasites (>LOG 3 reduction).
- LifeStraw removes bacteria, including: Escherichia coli, Campylobacter, Vibrio cholerae, Pseudomonas aeruginosa, Shigella, Salmonella.
- LifeStraw removes protozoa, including: Giardia lamblia ("Beaver Fever"), Cryptosporidium Parvum, Entamoeba histolytica.
- The LifeStraw does not filter heavy metals or viruses, and will not desalinate water

Available from Amazon the cost is around \$20. It has a 4.6 (out of 5) rating with about 560 reviews in.

LifeStraw® Portable Water Bottle



The award-winning LifeStraw® water filter has now been incorporated into a sports bottle to give users access to safe drinking water even when there is no water source nearby. Simply use the bottle to scoop water from any pond, stream or river, and you will have a supply of fresh, clean drinking water. Take the LifeStraw Go with you when you go hiking, camping, or travelling to areas with poor water quality. The LifeStraw filter is the most advanced personal water filter available on the market today. LifeStraw has been rigorously tested to surpass EPA standards for removing E. Coli, Giardia and Cryptosporidium oocysts, and many other waterborne contaminants. The LifeStraw Go filters water down to 0.2 microns without the use of chemicals. When the filter has reached capacity (1,000 liters / 264 gallons) it will stop taking in water. Since the water filter is detachable, you can simply purchase a replacement filter when the filter has reached capacity. The bottle can be reused indefinitely, saving waste from disposable plastic water bottles. Made of BPA-free Tritan, the LifeStraw Go bottle is extremely durable. The food-grade silicone mouthpiece is flexible which prevents it from chipping or cracking, and is removable for easy cleaning. Use the carabiner to attach to your backpack, or store in your preparedness kit to ensure access to safe, clean drinking water in an emergency. Bottle capacity 23 ounces. Dimensions 9 x 3 inches. Weight 7.8 ounces.

Cost of the bottle is around \$32.

How to Purify Water in the Wild



There are few places in North America where you can safely drink water from a lake or stream. So unless you camp where safe drinking water is readily available, you'd best bring your own. But at about 8 pounds per gallon, water can be a real drag if you have to carry it far. The alternative is to go light and purify what you need.

Boiling

Boiling water from an in-the-wild water source will kill almost everything, even parasites like giardia and cryptosporidium that can survive long exposure to iodine and chlorine. The Environmental Protection Agency recommends a one-minute rolling boil for elevations less than 6,600 feet and three minutes for higher elevations.

Chemical Treatment

Chlorine bleach or iodine will kill most waterborne pathogens, but if you get the dosage wrong, they can be dangerous. Water-treatment tablets are safer and easier to use. Chlorine dioxide and sodium dichloroisocyanurate tablets are more effective against giardia than chlorine or iodine tabs. However, water-treatment tablets will not reliably kill cryptosporidium, which, fortunately, is uncommon in surface waters.

A Filter or Purifier?

Filters strain out microorganisms, but they don't kill them. If hiking in the U.S., filtration is typically considered to be sufficient. A filter should remove the smallest infectious agents. For instance, a filter with a 1-micron absolute pore size will trap giardia and cryptosporidium. Viruses fly through the smallest pores, but they can be killed with water-treatment tablets after filtering. Fortunately, harmful viruses are extremely rare in surface waters.

Purifiers, on the other hand, typically use microfiltration and either chemical treatment or ultraviolet light to kill microorganisms, including viruses. This higher level of water purification is necessary when traveling outside of the U.S. in regions where viral contaminants are a risk.

Ultraviolet Purifiers

People who live near bodies of freshwater have long relied on ultraviolet light to kill microorganisms. The popular SteriPen was among the first to harness this technology for use in the wilderness. Just insert the UV bulb into a water bottle and activate the light. When the light turns off (after about a minute) the water is safe to drink. UV purifiers will destroy giardia, cryptosporidium and viruses. But they won't remove sediment or work in cloudy water. And they can purify only small amounts (usually one liter or less) of water at a time.

Tips for Treating Water

- Use a cotton cloth or coffee filter to strain out sediment before you filter/purify.
- Greenish water contains algae that harbor microorganisms. Algae can clog water filters and reduce the effectiveness of chemicals.
- Brownish water contains organic tree tannins that are typically safe to drink.
- Beavers are the favored host of Giardia. Don't take water from beaver streams or near beaver lodges.
- Don't draw water from shallows or near campsites.
- Avoid clear water that's tumbling over sunny rocks. While UV light does kill microbes, moving water mixes them and increases the chance they'll get into your water sample.
- Take water from near the surface of a calm, sunlit pool. Harmful organisms tend to lurk just out of reach of sunlight.

Sawyer 3-Way Water Filter



Extracted from a Review by Clarke Greene, Sept 5, 2013,
www.scoutmastercg.com/sawyer-3-way-water-filter-review/

I ran across the Sawyer 3-way water filter that employs hollow membrane technology derived from kidney dialysis. According to the company website they engineered a hollow fiber filter for quick flow, accurate filtration and to withstand back washing so the filter can be reused.

In the filter water passes through tiny micro-pores of many “U” shaped micro-tubes. The number of tubes in the filter creates a large surface area providing one of the fastest filter flow rates in the world. The pores are smaller than waterborne, illness-causing microorganisms. and the filters meet or exceed EPA and worldwide standards (there’s extensive testing data here if you are interested).

I purchased three of the Sawyer 3-way water filter elements, refit our Katadyn bags and took them on our week-long canoe trip this summer. After a week of trouble-free filtering for three different crews (about 40 gallons during the week for each group of nine) I am sold, the Sawyer 3-Way worked like a champ. As each day passed I monitored the filter’s performance and it didn’t seem to slow down. Truth be told I was a little worried that we had done something wrong because the filter seemed to flow too fast!

The Sawyer 3-way water filter advertises ‘one million gallons guaranteed’. I haven’t any idea if that’s possible, but so far so good.

Gravity filters are much more common now than they were several years ago. They have moving parts, and working from a reservoir rather than bending over a stream, are the quickest way(at least in my experience) to provide filtered water for a group. Sawyer offers a 2 and 4 liter filter system based on the 3-way filter element but anyone with a little ingenuity can modify a water bag for gravity filtration.

The 3-Way has quick tubing connectors (something increasingly common on outdoor gear) and includes a faucet adapter for back-washing the element. The instructions for back washing encourage using high pressure for back washing the filter, so hold the faucet adapter or you’ll get wet! I back washed our filters and they still flow as freely as they did when new. That’s really something.

Available from both Amazon and REI, \$55-\$60. 4.4 out of 5 stars with 44 reviews.

Hydration Packs

How to Choose a Hydration Pack



from www.trails.com/how_1923_choose-hydration-pack.html

Hydration packs are nearly a must-have for any serious hiker. While you could lug around several bottles of water, the hydration pack keeps your water stored comfortably and accessible whenever you need a sip. There are a ton of options on the market and it's easy to get overwhelmed. Luckily, hydration packs are pretty simple and there's really just a few points to compare.

Step 1

Determine the size of pack that you need. Although a hydration pack may serve primarily to carry your water, you'll probably want to pack some other items in there. Packs range widely in their capacity, from no storage space at all to about 2000 cubic inches. Any larger than that and you'll be looking at a medium-sized backpack. Decide what you need to bring with you including things like extra clothing, navigation gear, food and sun protection. Then purchase a pack that has enough room to store it all. If you need more room than a hydration pack provides, opt for a backpack with built-in hydration storage; you'll need to purchase the bladder with hose separately.

Step 2

Consider how much water that you'd like to carry in your hydration pack. Standard sizes include 35 oz., 50 oz., 70 oz., 72 oz. and 100 oz. How much water you need will depend upon where you hike, how long that you're out and how strenuous the hike or activity is. If you decide it prudent to carry water beyond the 100 oz. mark, look for a hydration pack with stretch side pockets, which you can use to store water bottles. Bear in mind that a liter of water (approximately 68 oz.) weighs roughly 2 lbs.

Step 3

Consider the compartments available. Organized compartments can help you to keep your belongings separated and easy to access.

Step 4

Check the hydration bladder and system. A number of different filling systems are available including top seals and screw-on lids. Consider how easy the system will be to fill with water, put ice cubes in and clean. Look for a bite valve with a turn-off knob to prevent leaking.

Step 5

Get a winter hydration pack. If you plan to use the pack solely for winter sports, look for packs with insulated parts that will mitigate freezing. You could also purchase a kit to convert a regular hydration pack into a winter pack.

Step 6

Try the pack on. Make sure that it fits comfortably. For a more accurate feel, put a few pounds of gear in it to see how comfortable it feels when full. A sternum strap is a handy design feature that will keep the pack stable and prevent the shoulder straps from sliding off during use.

Cleaning Hydration Packs



from www.outdoorgearlab.com/Hydration-Pack-Reviews/Buying-Advice

All hydration packs need to be cleaned eventually. If you are adding sugar/electrolyte powder to your water, you should clean your reservoir and hose every use or two. You can delay the frequency of cleaning by not using sugar drinks and leaving the bladder full of water or storing the bladder empty in the freezer (but in a plastic bag first).

But eventually you will need to clean all hydration bladders and hoses.

Cleaning Reservoirs/Bladder

Bags that zip open on top are the easiest to clean. Geiggerig models are dishwasher safe and even zip top models that can't go in the dishwasher are still much easier to get a brush in and clean. Perhaps an even larger factor is that zip top pouches are easy to dry. Just flip them inside out (or not) and they will dry just about anywhere.

Next in ease of cleaning are single compartment bladders with large openings so you can easily get a brush inside. Most CamelBak and Osprey reservoirs are of this design. These are relatively easy to clean, but can be a pain in the ass to dry. You either need to buy the drying rack or improvise a coat hanger or kitchen utensil. The hardest bladders to clean are ones that you can't easily get a brush into and/or have multiple compartments like the CamelBak waist belt hydration bladders. These require more effort with a brush and/or usually involve many rounds of warm water flushing with a bacteria killing additive, then more flushing to clean out that additive.

Cleaning Hoses

All hoses are a pain to clean, especially if you use sugar drink mixes. If you want to be sure your hose is bacteria free, you will need to scrub it with a brush and soapy water and then flush it out. CamelBak, Platypus, and Osprey all sell cleaning kits with a special long and skinny brush for the tube. Geigerrig does not. In this video, they seem to imply you never need to scrub brush out the drink tube. Maybe if you mainly just use treated water. But if you use any type of sugary drink, our experience is that all tubing eventually needs some scrubbing. The exception might be if you religiously follow the method in the Geigerrig video (using soapy water flush after each use of drink mixes). But don't get us wrong, in our test, the Geigerrig system is clearly the easiest to clean.

- Camelbak official how to clean video: http://www.camelbak.com/Sports-Recreation/Support/Product-Care/Cleaning/~link.aspx?_id=07F1F816C57C45E099AC51B00A23AF12&_z=z
- Osprey's official how to clean video: www.youtube.com/watch?v=_PQj7E4Fc1Q
- Geigerrig Cleaning Video: www.youtube.com/watch?v=kl1SHtYrNZs

Insect Repellent

3M Ultrathon



From the Scoutmaster Clarke Green, www.scoutmastercg.com/3m-ultrathon/

What's a good test of any insect repellent?

How about 25 Scouts canoeing their way through a buggy week in Ontario, Canada's Algonquin provincial park? In mid August we don't usually run into too many mosquitoes and the black fly season is long over. This was a wet summer and we encountered more mosquitoes than we were used to, many, many more.

One evening as we were chatting around the campfire we heard a quiet, yet audible, high-pitched buzzing sound that must have been a cloud of insects (we suspected mosquitoes).

We armed ourselves with 2 ounce tubes of 3M Ultrathon, the best repellent I have ever used and one that has earned a permanent place in my camping kit. One application (a pea-sized blob of lotion I applied to my ears, forehead, forearms, ankles and the backs of my hands) lasted for hours. There's usually enough wind when we were out on the water paddling to keep the mosquitoes at bay, but portaging is feeding time. 3m Ultrathon worked extraordinarily well repelling the clouds of mosquitoes eagerly waiting for us during portages through the still, damp, shady forest.

According to 3M in the mid-1980's, the US Military asked them to develop a better insect repellent, and the result, 3M Ultrathon, is being used today by troops in all areas of the world. 3m Ultrathon features a time-release technology that lasts up to 12 hours, resists perspiration and water, and is actually pretty economical. I balked at paying \$8.00 for a 2 ounce tube, but I shared mine with several Scouts for a week and still have plenty left.

3M Ultrathon Insect Repellent Lotion Available from Amazon for about \$8.

Did Bug Spray Melt my Watch?



Question: Dear Gear Guy (<http://boyslife.org/contact-us/gearguy/>), I got bug spray all over the face of my watch. It is waterproof, so the watch still works, but there is a dirty residue on the face of the watch. I have tried everything to remove it. What would you recommend?

I think I know exactly what happened. The bug spray you were using contains deet. It's the most effective mosquito repellent, but it's also known for being capable of melting plastics. Most likely, the face of your watch is made of some type of plastic. So there's actually no residue on the watch; the plastic was melted. I don't think there's anything you can do to fix it. Bummer, I know. I ruined a pair of nice sunglasses with bug spray. So this is mostly one of those learning moments: Be really careful when applying deet-based bug sprays, and keep them from coming in contact with any of your gear that has plastic parts.

Choosing the Right Insect Protection



Excerpted from an article by Buck Tilton in the pages of *Camping Life* magazine

In a galaxy here and now, the camper's war against the bugs continues, as it has for eons, ever since something sort of human swatted something mosquito-like. Bugs bite with their front parts or sting with their back parts, and sometimes it itches, sometimes it hurts and sometimes we get sick later. At all times we need to be armed - with knowledge and weapons - to put up the good fight. We'll never completely vanquish the dark hordes, but we can do our very best to win a few battles.

Mosquitoes - You can fight the itch with topical anti-itch products, such as Sting-Eze. If the product contains benzocaine, expect some pain relief as well. Oral anti-histamines like Benadryl will also reduce the itch. Steroid creams have little to no effect. Bites scratched open, especially on kids, should be monitored for the increasing redness, swelling and pain that indicate infection. And those bites should be washed well and bandaged.

You can prevent many 'skeeter bites. Clothing thick enough or tightly woven enough keeps their mouthparts from reaching our skin - and if the sleeves and pants are long, so much the better. Mosquitoes show a preference for dark colored clothing, so go light with, say khaki. You can use an insect repellent, and be sure the mosquito netting in tents remains in good repair. Mosquitoes are most active at dawn and dusk - good times to be behind netting. And try to avoid mosquito prone areas: standing water, dense vegetation and places where people say, "wow there sure are a lot of mosquitoes over there."

Ticks - All ticks should be removed as soon as they are found. Don't touch the tick with bare hands, but, if possible, put it in a bottle or some such container, saving it for lab tests in case of later illness. After removal, the wound should then be cleaned with soap and water or a disinfectant and an adhesive bandage applied. Tweezers should be cleaned after use.

An article in the *Journal of Wilderness and Environmental Medicine* revealed that 20 percent of tick attachment sites on humans are places where the biter (tick) cannot be seen by the bitten (you). The sites, in order of preference by ticks, were lower limbs, the lower abdomen and genital area, the back at chest level and the buttocks. The message: During tick season, the twice-a-day tick check we need to perform will require a mirror or someone we know well.

Wearing long-sleeved shirts and pants, with light colors more useful, allows us the chance to see a tick before it reaches our skin. Tucking long pants into high socks gives us even more protection. And we should try to avoid contact with tall grass and low bushes where they like to hide and wait.

Insect Repellents That Work

- **DEET (N, N-diethyl-3-methylbenzamide):** Continuing studies show it to be the best. The *New England Journal of Medicine* (2002) reported a concentration of 23.8% DEET kept bugs away completely for about five hours. People occasionally react negatively to DEET on their skin. Very rarely is the reaction serious.
- **Picaridin:** A chemical alternative to DEET that works well but not as long as DEET. Unlike DEET, no negative reactions are known.
- **Lemon Eucalyptus Oil:** Products with this oil offer complete protection for about two hours. And it smells kind of nice.
- **Soybean Oil:** Products with this oil keep bugs off for about an hour and a half.
- **Permethrin:** This is a potent insect neurotoxin synthesized, and proven safe, for human use. Apply it to clothing, not to skin, and bugs are killed after contact.

Nothing else, suggest many experts, is worth taking the time to smear on, swallow, or hang near your campsite - it just plain doesn't work.

Flashlights/Lanterns

Electric Lanterns



The classic light for campground camping has long been a gas-powered lantern with glass windows. Though these put out a bright, warm light that seems to last forever they are bulky, hot to the touch and noisy, and need ample ventilation. There is also the issue of disposing of the propane cylinders.

You can still get these reliable lanterns, but recent advances in LED lighting now provide you many electric lantern choices that are light, bright and compact enough even for backpacking. Virtually all battery-powered lanterns these days use LED (light emitting diode) technology. LED lamps offer numerous advantages:

- Long battery life
- Very good light output
- Can handle rugged use
- Quiet and exhaust-free
- Safe around kids (LEDs generate no heat)

Their only real downsides: battery usage and disposal. With electric lanterns, or any battery-powered light, do not attempt to use lithium or lithium-ion batteries unless manufacturer instructions state that the specific light is designed to operate with lithium batteries. If not, you run the risk of damaging, even ruining, a light by mismatching it with lithium batteries.

Alkaline batteries lose power quickly in temperatures below 20°F. (Lithium batteries, on the other hand, perform well in the cold.) To extend the life of alkaline batteries in the cold, carry them under clothing during the day and sleep with them inside a sleeping bag at night.

How to Recycle Flashlight Batteries



Batteries should never be simply thrown away. When batteries are thrown in the trash, they end up in a landfill. The chemicals and metals in batteries can be damaging to the environment and can contaminate natural resources, according to Mother Nature Network. The best thing to do with any type of battery is to recycle it. Flashlight batteries, for example, are usually ordinary batteries that you can purchase in any general store. Recycling this type of battery is not difficult as long as you know where to go and what to do.

Have a special place among your recyclable materials to place used batteries. Don't throw them in the trash, and don't mix them with other recyclables, such as glass bottles, plastic jugs or newspapers.

Understand what type of battery you need to recycle. Flashlight batteries are typically in the category of dry-cell batteries. This type of battery is commonly used for ordinary household products. Some types of dry-cell batteries include 9-volt, AA, AAA, D and C.

Do your homework. After you learn about the type of battery you have, you can find out where you can take the batteries to be recycled. Call your local recycling center or municipality to find out where you can recycle your flashlight batteries. All cities are different, but you should be able to find somewhere nearby. Check with large electronic stores as well. These stores sometimes have areas within the store where you can drop off batteries to be recycled.

The MPOWERD Luci Solar Inflatable Lantern



The Luci — a “little solar lantern with a big impact” — is made by MPOWERD. It's very simple in design, but very powerful in its uses. It's lightweight, compact, solar powered, easy to use, and fun. At just \$18, you really get a lot for your money.

When inflated, Luci's measurements are 5" diameter x 4.5" tall, and its deflated height is a compact ½". Because it only weighs a hair over 3 ounces, it won't weigh you down — making it perfect for any EDC or bug out bag. Since it is about the same size as a CD (and barely thicker than a CD case), the deflated lantern can literally fit in your back pocket (or any pocket in a pair of cargo pants). The Luci has 4 settings that can be cycled through by pushing the button in the center of the bottom — press once for bright (50 lumens), twice for super bright (65 lumens), three times for strobe (emergency flashing), and the fourth time will turn the unit off.

No more heavy batteries, smell of propane or candles. The Luci is 100 percent solar powered. It's great for traveling because when deflated it packs down very small. Just set it in the sun or window during the day, or hook it to your backpack, and you will have plenty of light at night. The light is not too bright, not too dark, but just right. The low setting is nice for reading at night and the high setting is bright enough to cook a camp meal by. While the lantern will charge with incandescent lighting, it will hold its charge longer with direct sunlight. It takes about 8 hours to develop a full charge, and once charged will withstand 8-12 hours of constant use on bright setting (not super bright) before needing to be charged again.

The Luci has a strap on both ends for use as handles, so you can hang the lantern from the ceiling of your tent (or primitive shelter) with a carabiner or some 550 cord (this glow in the dark paracord would be cool) and pretty much light up the entire area. If you had a few of these lanterns, you could hang them in strategic locations around your camp and bathe the entire area in a soft glow for hours. Speaking of bathing, since it's waterproof, you can also use the Luci as a light for your camp shower tent, too.

Headlamps: How to Choose



When you're setting up your tent at night, trail running at dusk, or just looking for something in your attic, you can't beat the hands-free lighting convenience offered by a headlamp. Headlamps today use LEDs almost exclusively as their light source. LEDs are rugged, energy-efficient and long-lasting.

So, what sets one headlamp apart from another? How do you know what to buy? To find out look at this article: www.rei.com/learn/expert-advice/headlamp.html

Best Way to Store Flashlight Batteries



Anyone who has ever reached for a flashlight in an emergency knows the frustration that develops when you realize that the batteries inside are dead. No battery life, no light. But this scenario can easily be avoided by storing the batteries in a designated area, outside the flashlight itself. Not only is it better for the batteries to remain in their original packaging until they are ready to be used, it is also better for the flashlight. Over time, batteries that are left inside a flashlight can corrode and destroy the metal contacts, rendering the flashlight unusable.

If you do not intend to use your flashlight in the near future, remove the batteries. Storing batteries inside any electronic device is never a good idea, because it increases the chances of corrosion.

Place the flashlight batteries in a spot where they will be easily accessible in case of emergency. Storing the flashlight in the same cabinet or drawer as the batteries will ensure that both can be found quickly when needed.

Use a Ziploc bag to keep your batteries fresh. Just pop them into the baggie and zip; store them next to the flashlight for easy access. This will also ensure that they are not just floating around loose in the drawer.

Keep the flashlight batteries in their original packaging whenever possible. Storing them in this manner until they are needed will keep them fresh, and ensure that you have working batteries when you need them.

Store your flashlight batteries by themselves, not with a bunch of other loose batteries. A drawer full of batteries—some used, some half used and some questionable—will cause frustration when you reach for your flashlight and the batteries to power it on.

Do not store your flashlight batteries in the refrigerator. Contrary to popular belief, this does not make them last longer. As a matter of fact, cold temperatures have an adverse reaction on batteries and will actually drain them even faster. Instead battery companies recommend storing batteries between 68 and 78 degrees F at 35 to 65 percent humidity. Under those conditions, alkalines should last between five and seven years, carbon zinc for three to five years, and lithium cells for 10 to 15 years on the shelf.

Flashlights: How to Choose



Although headlamps have surged in popularity, flashlights remain a good choice whenever a handheld light is preferred, such as:

- any time you want the strongest portable beam available.
- when dexterity and precision in controlling the light is important.
- being able to set down a light to work on a task.
- signaling.

Advances in LED (light-emitting diode) technology and battery efficiency have resulted in flashlights that are smaller, lighter and brighter than they were just a few years ago.

What is the best LED flashlight for you? This article will help you narrow your selection: www.rei.com/learn/expert-advice/flashlight.html

Trek Poles

Trekking Pole Maintenance



As basic as they are in design, trekking poles do have moving parts, which means that occasionally they'll break or seize up. Simple maintenance will prevent most problems with your "sticks," and a little ingenuity will handle most field emergencies.

Maintaining Telescope

Telescopic ski poles and hiking poles are great as long as the adjustment system locks and unlocks properly when you want it to. Not much is worse than leaning on a hiking pole during a creek crossing and having it collapse! Here's how to keep things moving:

- Dry poles thoroughly at home after wet weather or creek crossing use to prevent internal corrosion. Extend poles far enough to expose the threads of the expansion plugs, or maybe even separate the sections. After drying with one end of the tube down, turn it the other way up to get rid of any other trapped water.
- Corrosion inside is less likely with better-quality poles that are anodized internally.
- If you detect corrosion on the metal threads that go into the plastic expansion plug, then it's time to dismantle and clean. Do not use a wire brush for this task, since it will remove whatever corrosion-protecting finish remains on the threads. Instead, wipe the threadswith a soft cloth lightly moistened with WD-40 or alcohol. Warning: Do not get lubricants like WD-40 or oil onto the plastic expansion plug itself, or on the inside of the tubes. Put a trace of oil or, better, silicone grease on the threads to prevent additional corrosion.

Field Fix for Failed Locks

If the pole fails to lock properly in the field, the culprit is usually corroded or dirty threads. This results in more friction between the plug and its threads than between the plug and the tube. Then when you turn the tube to lock or unlock, the plug doesn't turn on its threads and fails to expand or contract. Solve the problem this way:

- Increase the friction between plug and tube by extending the pole almost to its limit and hold it horizontally with one hand at the joint. This puts sideways pressure on the plug and it won't turn in its tube now.
- Rotate the smaller tube until the plug expands enough and tightens up sufficiently to still allow sliding but not turning.

Adjust to length and tighten to lock. Clean the threads at the earliest opportunity!

MSR SureLock™ UL-2 Trekking Poles

Review by Jerry Schleining Jr., www. <http://thescoutmasterminute.net/2013/12/29/msr-surelocktm-ul-2-trekking-poles/>



I recently purchased new trekking poles, and being me, I did a lot more homework on the purchase than most folks looking for camping gear. I have been looking for some time (since we got back from Philmont in 2012) for new trekking poles as I bent one of my trekking poles while at Philmont. They are still usable, but collapsing them is hard now and since I have had that set for about 10 years, I figured it was time to replace them.

I looked at no less than 50 different styles, brands, and types over the past 9 months or so and finally found a pair that I really like and thought I would give them a shot.

First you may ask, what the heck took you so long? Great question. Like I said, I over researched them. When looking at good high-end trekking poles, I knew that I would be committing at least \$100 to the purchase. But since I also knew that the poles I buy needed to last, after all I use trekking poles all year round and on every hike, backpacking trip and camp out, I became real picky in the choice.

What I ended up getting is the MSR SureLock™ UL-2 Ultralight 2 section Poles. They retail for \$90, but with a Boy Scout discount and finding them on sale at a local outfitter, I paid \$62.

So here are the specs:

According to the packaging the SureLock™ UL-2 trekking poles weigh in at 16.5 oz or 468 grams. As these are MSR's "ultralight" trekking poles, I am sure that they put the heavy end on the packaging. On my scale with the winter or snow baskets on the poles, both of them weigh in at 15 oz. The trekking poles with the summer baskets weigh in at 14.5 oz. The length of the poles are as advertised. At its lowest setting the trekking poles are 41 inches long or 105 cm. They extend to 55 inches or 140 cm. Fully collapsed the trekking poles are 31 inches. There are 8 adjustable holes along the trekking pole to find the right setting for you. I personally set them at 120 cm.

Here is what I like compared to my last poles, which for the record are the Black Diamond Trail Trekking poles. The MSR SureLock™ poles are 2 section poles, the Black Diamond poles I have are 3 section. This makes the MSR poles faster and easier to set up. I really like that.

I LOVE the Positive Locking system on the SureLock™. The rolling bearing pins smoothly lock into place and once seated are not going anywhere. I configured the trekking poles to my height and leaned over them with my entire upper body weight, they did not flex or pop out. With your standard cam lock or twist friction locks over the course of a hike I always had to readjust due to slippage.

The poles have a unique design in that they are not round. This design is called Non Rotating tri-lobe geometry, this assists with the poles not being able to rotate. This keeps the Positive locking system in place.

The trekking poles are made of 7000 series aluminum. This is super light and very strong.

I am very happy with these trekking poles. They are comfortable, light, strong, and easy to use. I can not wait to get them out on the trail.

Other

Are There Restrictions on Ax Sizes in Scouting?

**The question**

I have been told for years that Boy Scouts are only allowed to use three-quarters-size or boys' size ax. Is this true? I have searched and searched but cannot find any reference to ax-size restrictions.

The answer

Richard Bourlon, the BSA's health and safety czar, offers this response:

If we go back into the Fieldbooks of the 1940s and 1950s, we find that we recommended a hand ax and a smaller-size felling ax. Those are probable sources for the folklore that we "only allow" such things.

These days, though, choosing the right equipment for the job at hand is the best answer we could give. In a perfect world, you'd fit the tool to the job and the youth.

In most cases with youth, a hand ax and/or a smaller felling ax would most likely fit the bill.

I think we need more common sense and qualified supervision instead of going back to blanket statements like "we only allow," in our program.

The Boy Scout Handbook (12th edition, Pages 406 to 409) addresses safe ax use. Read that to refresh yourself.

In the end, though, we don't specify a maximum length or size.

What about knife length?

There is no limit on knife length just like there's no limit on ax length. Instead, remember Bourlon's mention of "common sense and qualified supervision."

The *Guide to Safe Scouting* states that knives are part of the program, but that long sheath knives should be avoided. (But even then, there is no statement that they're "banned"). However, state, localities and schools may have laws or rules concerning knives. The 3" length and non-locking rule that most people cite as BSA regulation is actually an Army policy for troops on military installations.

Paddleboarding Buying Guide



It looks like walking on water. Kinda feels like it too. Stand-up paddleboarding (SUP) is one of the most fun things you can do on the water, and it's one of the fastest-growing outdoor sports.

Though SUP's roots are in surfing, the majority of SUP boards are now used for flat water touring and fitness paddling. You'll also find SUPs being used to race, run whitewater rivers, fish and even to reach out-of-the-way camp spots. Whatever way you want to paddle, *Boy's Life Gear Guy* brings you everything you need to know about SUP:

<http://boyslife.org/outdoors/guylife/141206/paddleboarding-buying-guide/>

Mess Kits



A mess kit is a set of personal eating and cooking equipment that's portable enough for camping. Often, the pieces (a cook pot, bowl, cup, etc.) nest together in a compact package that fits easily inside a backpack. These packages are generally lighter weight and more affordable than buying each piece individually. And with a mess kit, before each trip you can pick and choose exactly which pieces of the kit you want/need on the trail. Expect to pay from \$10 to \$30 for a basic kit.

And when you have no idea of what kit to select from the available online list of thousands of products, then how do you choose. One way is to see what everyone else is actually buying.

Myth: The folding light weight aluminum mess kits are the best for novice cooks to learn to cook with.

If you were going to fry an egg for your breakfast on your stove at home would you use a mess kit? Do you see anyone cooking on their home range with a mess kit? No, because the frying pan is so light weight, it is hard to control the heat. The hot spots on the bottom of the pan (and helped by the material the pan is made of) make it very hard to cleanup when you are done. If you were going to teach your son/daughter to cook by frying an egg at home would you have them use their mess kit? Probably not. You would want them to have the best chance possible to succeed.

Myth: The lightweight folding mess kits are needed because they are used for backpacking. Any weight in outdoor cooking equipment is a sin.

Backpacking cooking is now done almost entirely with freeze dried foods. If possible filters or other means are used to obtain water on the trail instead of bringing it with you. You should not expect to backpack with bacon, hamburgers and eggs, as the accompanying weight of water and the overhead/weight of keeping it cool makes it too hard to carry. If you are backpacking you heat water to boiling. Add the food. Put a lid on the food. Eat the food. Clean up your dishes. If you go to a backpacking store and look at the high end equipment, the better quality cooking equipment is made of stainless steel.

But if you aren't backpacking, you don't need lightweight, you need strength and durability.

Buy a McFlurry-Get a Sweet Spoon

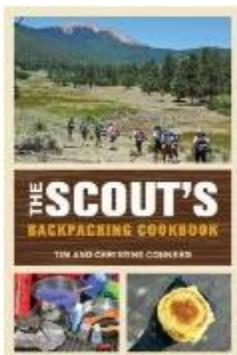


When McDonalds makes this frozen treat, they stick a long slender stiff spoon onto the mixer shaft and turn it on and then you get the spoon with the flurry. It is a nice spoon for reaching down into a deep bag of food and it is much more sturdy than most plastic spoons.

Cooking

General

Book – The Scout's Backpacking Cookbook

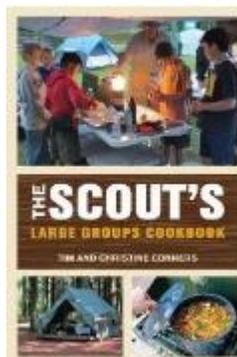


Cooking on the trail is a unique challenge requiring unique solutions. For newcomers to the trail, *The Scout's Backpacking Cookbook* addresses the skills necessary to meet the challenge by showing how to successfully plan and prepare a backpacking menu while keeping the weight of your food and cooking gear within reason. Each recipe has been personally tested and approved by the authors and is accompanied by at-a-glance information about cooking method, preparation time, challenge level, and servings. Over one hundred outstanding recipes spanning a wide range of preparation techniques and meal categories for experts and novices alike provide plenty of easy options for your next adventure.

The backcountry beckons and the high mountains call. Whether you're hungry for Fear-Factor Beef Jerky, Coyote Butte Coleslaw, Vent-the-Tent Burritos, or another trail treat, you'll find the perfect backpacking recipes collected in this book. As you follow the lure of the trail, may this book enhance the fun and fellowship that you and your troop or crew finds in the wild places of the world.

Available from Amazon, \$12.30 paperback.

Book – The Scout's Large Groups Cookbook



Based on the expertise and advice from Scout leaders across the United States, this book is designed specifically to assist the camp chef in planning and cooking for groups of eight to twenty. Over one hundred outstanding, easy-to-prepare recipes form the foundation of this book, whether you're hungry for Italian Bear Bait with Pasta, Prairieland Pizza Stew, or another group-friendly meal. Also included are valuable tips and resources to help build and strengthen basic skills that specifically address the challenges of cooking for large groups of Scouts. Each recipe has been personally tested and approved by the authors and is accompanied by at-a-glance information about cooking method, preparation time, challenge level, and servings. With plenty of great ideas for your camping menu and solid advice to back it up, failure is no longer an option.

Available from Amazon, \$10.60 paperback.

Seasonings in a Straw



This tip comes from *Field & Stream Magazine* via Pinterest:

Use straws to store salt, pepper, and spices for camping trips. Heat one end of a clear plastic straw with a lighter, then crimp it with your fingers or a multitool. Fill the straw with the desired seasoning, and repeat the process on the other end. Just snip off one of the ends when you're cooking, and reseal it when you're done. Store in a plastic bag in case of a leak.

What Expiration Dates Really Mean



After each camping trip there always seems to be some food left over that is stored in the patrol chuck box until next time. So by that next campout, is that food still safe to eat? Do we just look at the expiration date and throw it away?

Here's some food for thought: Expiration dates refer to quality and freshness of food, not safety. (Yep, that's a shocker!) So even if a food item passes its expiration date, that item could technically still be safe to eat.

Expiration dates on food and drink products are not required or regulated by Federal administrators (with the exception of infant formula). Those mysterious dates printed on food containers telling us when to purchase, eat, or throw out that tub of yogurt by are actually decided by each individual manufacturer. To complicate things even more, the printed numbers can mean multiple things, and there's no continuity between types of products. So we've spelled it out for you with help from the USDA:

- "Sell-By." This number is for the store, letting employers know how long a certain product can stay on the shelf. You should buy the food item before this date passes to ensure it's fresh.
- "Best if Used Before/By." This date helps specify when a product is at its peak freshness. It does not indicate the safety of the item. Buy and use before this date for best quality.
- "Use-By." These dates indicate when a product will start deteriorating in quality and flavor. (Again, it's not a safety guide!) Again, it's best to buy and use products before this date for best quality, but consuming the product a few days late won't kill ya.

Canned Goods – According to the USDA, high-acid canned goods, like tomatoes and citrus fruits, will keep for up to 1½ years. Low-acid canned goods—that's pretty much everything else, including vegetables, meat, and fish—will last for up to 5 years. Canned foods are sterile, so they won't host bacteria, but eventually the taste and texture of the items inside will deteriorate. Keep them at room temperature in a dark place, like a cabinet or a pantry. Of course, there's no way to find out whether a canned food has gone south unless you open it, so if you can't remember when you bought it and want to err on the safe side, throw it. And toss any cans that are bulging and leaking or that spurt liquid when opened. Although the toxin that causes botulism is extremely rare in commercial canned goods, damaged cans have a higher chance of being contaminated.

Pasta – Pasta is a dry good that is hard to spoil—it has no water content. As long as it doesn't smell odd, you can keep pasta longer than the expiration date.

Dry Goods – Flour, sugar, salt, etc. These products do not expire and even the quality is not severely impacted with age. Exception: if the product has a high oil content it can go rancid (like rice). Just give it a sniff. If it smells rancid, toss it. Also products like baking powder lose their potency so keep this rotated approximately every 6 months.

Cookware: How to Choose



Cookset or Individual Pieces? You can buy a complete cookset or cookware items piece by piece. Cooksets are collections of pots, pans and lids designed to nest together. Some cooksets include extras such as cups, mugs or plates that nest within the pots. Individual pieces allow you the freedom to build your set exactly the way you want it. This method may not be ideal if you're looking to save weight for backpacking. However, it's a great way to build versatility into your cookware collection.

Cookware Material Options

Aluminum

Pros: Lightweight, affordable and a good conductor of heat. Good for simmering foods without scorching.

Cons: Breaks down slowly when exposed to acidic foods. Dents and scratches easily.

Some people ask if using aluminum cookware is unhealthful. Based on reports from the National Institutes of Health, the Food and Drug Administration and the London-based Alzheimer's Society, no health risks are associated with the use of aluminum pots, pans or skillets. States the Alzheimer's Society: "There is no conclusive medical or scientific evidence of a link between aluminum and Alzheimer's disease." While not a health concern, cooking leafy greens or cauliflower in aluminum cookware is not recommended since it can impact the taste and appearance.

Hard-anodized aluminum

Pros: This oxidized material resists scratches and abrasion and is long lasting.

Cons: None.

Stainless steel

Pros: Tougher, more scratch-resistant than aluminum.

Cons: Heavier than aluminum, doesn't conduct heat as uniformly (can cause hot spots that scorch food).

Titanium

Pros: Super lightweight—it's your lightest option without compromised strength. Highly corrosion-resistant, heats up quickly and operates effectively without maximum heat.

Cons: More expensive than other options. Conducts heat less evenly than stainless steel. Take care not to overheat it.

Cast iron

Pros: It's tough and ideal for baking or cooking.

Cons: Very heavy; not for backpacking. Requires proper care.

Nonstick coatings (available on some metal cookware)

Pros: Make clean up a breeze.

Cons: Less durable than regular metal surfaces. Most can be scratched by metal utensils.

Cookware coated with food-grade fluoropolymer PTFE can emit toxic fumes if severely overheated. Inhaling these fumes can cause flu-like symptoms in humans, and they have been known to kill pet birds. Use caution when cooking with nonstick-coated cookware (don't use when broiling food, for example) or consider using uncoated options instead.

Plastic

Pros: Lightweight, cheap, non-abrasive. Perfect for utensils and air-tight food containers.

Cons: Not as durable or heat-resistant as metal. Some plastics can pick up and retain food flavors/odors.

Food Safety Practices for Outdoor Cooking



Excerpt From <http://cubscoutideas.com/4131/food-safety-practices-for-outdoor-cooking/>

In the new Cub Scout Adventure program, our Webelos will complete the Cast Iron Chef adventure. This will help them learn how to cook outdoors which has some challenges that we don't have when cooking indoors. *[GC Editor's Note: This is also good information for new Boy Scouts who didn't have to do the Iron Chef].*

One of the challenges is how to keep your food safe when you don't have the luxury of a refrigerator. Our boys need to learn good food safety practices while cooking outdoors.

It's important to **keep food at the correct temperature** to avoid bacteria. Most bacteria do not grow rapidly at temperatures below 40 °F or above 140 °F. The **"Danger Zone" is any temperature between 40 °F and 140 °F**. Bacteria multiply rapidly at these temperatures and can reach dangerous levels after 2 hours. If the outdoor temperature is 90 °F or above, it only takes 1 hour for bacteria to reach a dangerous level.

Since it's difficult to keep food hot for very long without a heat source, it's **better to cool the food you'll take on your camping trip**. If you're "car camping," taking a cooler will be easy. Blocks of ice will last longer than ice cubes. Fill empty milk cartons with water and freeze them to make ice blocks. While you're at the campsite, **cover your cooler** with a blanket to keep it insulated.

Consider taking 2 coolers—one for food and one for drinks. The drink cooler will be opened and closed a lot which will cause the ice to melt more quickly. Food will stay colder in a cooler that isn't opened often.

Take a food thermometer. It's hard to tell when meat or poultry is done if you're cooking on a grill or camp stove, so use a thermometer to ensure that food is cooked to the correct temperature. You can order one through my Amazon affiliate link.

Keep Everything Clean

Raw meat and poultry contain bacteria that can be spread to other foods through the juices dripping from packages or your hands. The boys should make sure they double wrap or bag uncooked meat to avoid contaminating other food. Use different platters and utensils for raw and cooked meat.

They also need to remember to **wash their hands well** before and after handling raw poultry or meat. Your campsite may not have running water, so make sure you take soap and water for cleanup.

Their **fruits and vegetables also need to be washed and dried** before packing them in the cooler.

How to Carry Eggs on a Camping Trip



Planning the transport of the fragile fresh egg is a challenge to backpackers and campers, many of whom believe that the powdered variety belongs in a fowl and distant food group. The quest for fresh product carried without leakage can follow either of two basic strategies, depending on whether the goal is eggs for frying or boiling; or scrambled, suitable for omelets, wraps, burritos, or for mixing into recipes.

Many freeze-dried egg mixes (usually in tough 4 to 8 oz. packets) are tasty, but lack "real-egg" consistency. For car-campers, the issues of weight and refrigeration are trivial. Backpacking egg-lovers must balance these concerns with their tolerance for processed eggs.

Carrying Individual Eggs

- Step 1 Tuck the eggs into the niches of a plastic egg container, available at discount or hiking supply stores. Secure the top of the container with duct tape, even though it clicks shut independent of tape. Secured this way, the delicate gems will remain fresh the length of any camping trip if kept out of direct sunlight.
- Step 2 Encase the container with a large Ziplock bag in case your pack suffers an unexpected blow.
- Step 3 Place the package in a protected part of your pack, surrounded by soft objects.

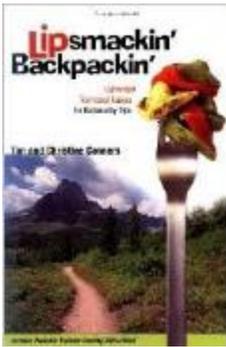
Pre-mixed Eggs

- Step 1 Break eggs into a bowl or camping container. Break the yolks. Mix things up and, if freezing, add a teaspoon of salt to maintain the integrity of the texture.
- Step 2 Transfer the mixture to an airtight container and freeze it. Although it is not strictly necessary, freezing extends the fresh-life of the eggs. Oh... and don't forget to label the bottle. Not only will this help avoid mistaking the eggs for juice, but markers along the side (like a measuring cup) show how many eggs you have left.
- Step 3 After freezing, enclose your package in a Ziplock bag before placing it in your pack.

Egg Safety

Beta Studies have shown that fresh, never-refrigerated, neverwashed eggs from farmers' markets are safe and edible stored at room temp for several months; unwashed eggs have a natural antibacterial coating. Store-bought eggs are washed and cooled, and many also have thinner shells, which allow bacteria growth—the FDA takes a conservative line and says to never keep storebought eggs at temps above 45°F.

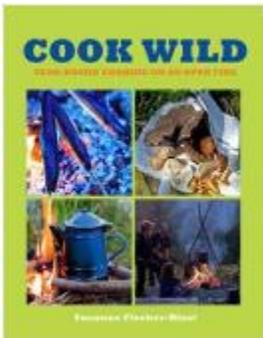
Book – Lipsmackin' Backpackin'



Tired of gorp, cereal bars, and beef jerky? Would you instead like to dine on spaghetti, chicken salad, and cheesecake in the backcountry? Now you can. *Lipsmackin' Backpackin'* is your guide to essential eating on the trail. A new kind of outdoor cookbook, this all-in-one food guide is filled with trail-tested recipes providing at-home preparation directions, on-the-trail preparation directions (including a special take-along section), nutritional information, the number of servings each recipe will produce, and the weight the ingredients will add to your backpack. You'll also get food preparation and meal-planning tips from experienced long-distance hikers. And once you have chosen your favorite recipes, mastered your outdoor cooking skills, and are ready for a hike, consult the back of this book for information on America's National Scenic and Historic Trails.

Available from Amazon, \$10.30 paperback. Also comes in a vegetarian book, *Lipsmackin' Vegetarian Backpackin'*, \$10.85 paperback.

Book – Cook Wild: Year-Round Cooking on an Open Fire

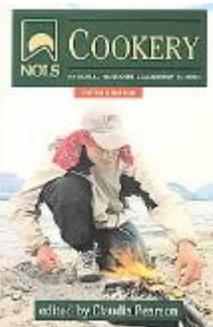


Everything tastes better in the open air, around a fire. Here are 100 recipes to inspire you to venture outdoors and eat wild all year round. From the simple dishes that sustained our ancestors to feasts fit for modern foodies, the book draws from a rich repertoire of traditional cooking methods and recipes that have been passed down to this day. Whether it's Lebanese flatbread, hot smoked trout, chicken wrapped in clay, or waffles, chocolate bananas and Transylvanian tree cakes, all are simple and don't need special tools. The author has years of experience of cooking outdoors and the recipes, arranged by season, are easy to follow for both beginners and more seasoned campfire chefs.

With clear instructions on selecting wood and making a fire, a range of ovens and cooking methods and even suggestions for wild ingredients to forage, this is a book for anyone who wants to enjoy the thrill of cooking outdoors, with wood smoke, companionship and fresh air to sharpen the appetite.

Available from Amazon, \$19 paperback.

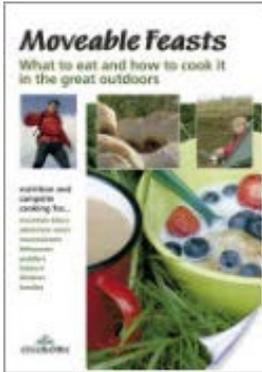
Book – National Outdoor Leadership School Cookery



Each year 3000 students spend two weeks to three months in the back country on National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) courses. That's a lot of back country cooking! The folks at NOLS have developed a simple, varied and inexpensive diet that is based on staple foods that can be found at any grocery store. There's also a wealth of information on planning, packing and preparing meals for extended trips or just a weekend. One Scoutmaster's particular favorite recipe is Thai Gado-gado Spaghetti featuring a peanut sweet and sour sauce. Mixing peanut butter in spaghetti raises some eyebrows but he has never had any leftovers.

Available from Amazon, \$11.20 paperback. Look up as NOLS Cookery.

Book – Moveable Feasts: What to Eat and How to Cook it in the Great Outdoors



Moveable Feasts: What to eat and how to cook it in the great outdoors is a unique guidebook to optimal nutrition and camp cooking for anyone who wants to cook or eat outdoors. So whether you're a seasoned mountaineer, backpacker, paddler, mountain biker, adventure racer or completely new to the outdoor life; whether you're camping on an official site or in the wild; whether you're competing, hanging out with mates, or exploring with the family, there's something here for you.

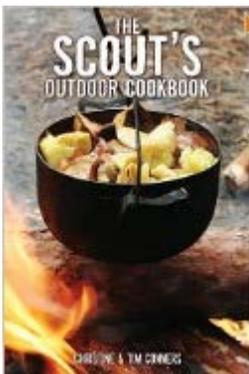
Presented in two parts, Moveable Feasts is all you need to plan your catering for your next camping trip, whatever your camping style.

Part one is crammed with practical advice in 10 chapters on topics such as: nutrition, camp cooking equipment, water storage and treatment, camp larder basics, packing, storing and transporting food, running your camp kitchen, camping with children and sourcing wild and seasonal foods.

Part two describes nearly a hundred easy-to-follow recipes for nutritious, mouth-watering camp meals - snacks, main meals, puddings, cakes and drinks - that will fuel you well into the next day's action. And there's an index to help you find the high-energy, lightweight, child-friendly, vegetarian, prepare-at-home or super-quick recipe options.

Paperback for around \$19. No reviews yet on Amazon yet.

Book – The Scout's Outdoor Cookbook



In this book of delicious outdoor cooking classics, authors Tim and Christine Connors bring together over three hundred of the favorite recipes of leaders from the Boy Scouts of America and the Girl Scouts of the USA. Sometimes wacky, always practical, this book will help the new camp cookie to develop a thorough foundation of basic skills, while providing the experienced chef with plenty of new recipes and techniques to add additional dimension and enjoyment to their outdoor cooking.

"The Scout's Outdoor Cookbook" emphasizes the best food preparation and techniques currently used in scouting. Thoroughly covered are recipes employing time-tested cooking methods using Dutch ovens, pots and pans, grills, and open fire. Many outstanding no-cook dishes are also provided.

Every recipe was thoroughly tested by the authors, and each is presented using clear and reliable instructions that eliminate guesswork and variability. Preparation steps are sequentially numbered for smooth workflow and for objectively delegating tasks. Equipment lists are provided to ensure that the cook isn't caught short in the field. The use of challenge levels and icons allow the reader to quickly identify recipes ideal to their unique situation.

Breakfast, lunch, and dinner are all thoroughly covered. And what would scouting be without snacks and desserts? Our large collection will keep your group's sweet tooth satisfied for years! A wide assortment of bread and drink recipes round out the list. Award winners, historical favorites, and many surprises are sure to please you and your scouts.

Available from Amazon, \$13.50 paperback

Huevos Rancheros – A Breakfast Idea



from www.ScoutMasterCG.com

I was introduced to huevos rancheros or “rancher’s eggs’ by one of my Scouts nearly twenty years ago when he was our grubmaster for a cabin camping trip. Since then it’s been one of my preferred camping breakfasts.

A lot of recipes call for toasting whole tortillas and serving whole fried eggs on top of them, but I like this version (where the tortilla is torn up and sautéed with onions) much better. Adding chorizo (spicy Mexican sausage) cilantro and raisins that have been soaked in hot water for a while make it even richer. An easy to prepare, filling breakfast that’s perfect for Scouts. Try huevos rancheros, the Tabasco and salsa adds a little zing to your morning – mucho gusto!

Utensils Needed: frying pan, bowl, knife, cutting board, spatula

Ingredients for 1 serving

1 egg
 1 teaspoon water
 1/2 10” flour tortilla
 1/2 cup diced onion
 Butter or margarine for frying
 Tabasco, Salt and pepper to taste
 1 tablespoon Salsa

1. Warm cast iron skillet on medium heat.
2. Break eggs into a bowl and stir until well scrambled.
3. Tear tortillas into approximately 1 inch squares.
4. Melt butter or margarine into hot skillet.
5. Sauté onions and tortilla pieces in skillet until tortilla starts to brown.
6. Add eggs to the sautéed onions and tortillas. Lightly scrape the eggs off the bottom and edges of the skillet as they cook, once the eggs are cooked remove the skillet from the heat and serve.
7. Top each serving with salsa, Tabasco, salt and pepper to taste.

Options Break up chorizo sausage and brown it after sautéing the onions and tortilla. Add fresh chopped cilantro and raisins that have been soaked in hot water for ten or fifteen minutes with the scrambled eggs.

Online Resource – Recipes for Chilly Weather



Trail cooking and the Outdoors blog offers Recipes For Chilly Weather (<http://blog.TrailCooking.com/2011/10/26/recipes-for-chilly-weather/>). Hearty beverages, dinners, snacks and other great recipes from Sarah Kirkconnell. Sarah and is also the author of *Freezer Bag Cooking: Trail Food Made Simple* – a fantastic book for Scouts about trail food.

When Cooking, Watch for the 'Danger Zone'



Nothing says “worst campout ever” like a bad case of food-borne stomach distress.

To make sure your campers steer clear of these potentially serious tummy troubles – which result in more than 100,000 hospitalizations each year – here’s the latest information on how to transport, cook, and store food on campouts.

Howard Seltzer, food safety education advisor at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, says to watch out for the “Danger Zone” when it comes to serving perishables like meat, poultry, eggs, and seafood. When food is stored below 40 degrees Fahrenheit, the cold inhibits the growth of bacteria and other pathogens. When food is cooked above 140 degrees, heat does the same. Between 40 and 140 degrees, however, bacteria can grow quickly, so make sure your food doesn’t stay in the Danger Zone too long.

Food problems can start while you’re still in the driveway at home. Be sure to transport perishables in the air-conditioned part of the car, since car trunks can get pretty steamy on warm fall days. Don’t pack meat in the same coolers as vegetables, because if juices from meat or poultry leak into uncooked vegetables, the veggies will be contaminated. Likewise, don’t put cold drinks in with perishables, since the drink cooler will be opened frequently on a warm day. The more it’s opened, the faster ice or ice packs will thaw.

And make meat thermometers a must in patrol boxes. Cook ground meat (beef, port, veal, or lamb) or meat mixtures until the thermometer reaches 160 degrees. For poultry, it’s 165 degrees. For other fresh meats, you’re safe at 145 degrees.

Finally, remember that food – cold or hot – should not be kept outside a cooler for more than two hours if the outside temperature is below 90 degrees. Above 90, it’s one hour.

For much more on safe cooking and food storage, check out www.FoodSafety.gov. There you’ll find myths about food safety (no, spoiled food doesn’t always smell bad) and some fun “Recipes for Disaster” videos. You can also download the USDA Foodkeeper app for more advice on using food at peak quality.

Online Resource – Group Recipes



Blogger Steve Karoly is a camp cook in California who shares some great group recipes on <http://RoundTheChuckbox.blogspot.com/>

Dutch Oven

Controlling the Temperature of Your Dutch Oven



You can cook anything in a Dutch oven that you can cook in your kitchen oven at home. To avoid serving “burnt offerings,” though, follow the simple “Rule of Three.”

Take the diameter of the oven (12 inches, for example) and subtract three ($12 - 3 = 9$) for the number of coals to place below the oven and add three ($12 + 3 = 15$) for the number of coals to place on the lid. This creates a temperature of about 325 degrees.

To increase the temperature by 25 degrees, place one coal on top of the oven and one below it (see the accompanying chart). But weather will have an effect. If it's hot, the oven will cook faster; if it's cold, it will cook slower. Wind also dramatically affects the results of Dutch oven cooking.

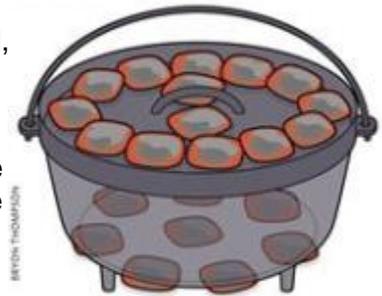
Also influencing the result: the way you position the charcoal briquettes. Make a ring of coals about the diameter of the oven's bottom, placing one coal in the center. Set the oven on top of the coals and evenly place coals around the outside edge of the lid, with two coals in the center and one on each side of the handle. Some Dutch oven cooks disagree about placing coals in the center. Experiment and see what works best for you.

Hint: If you can smell your food cooking, you'd better check it regardless of the time suggested by the recipe. It's probably done.

Watch out when you lift the lid to check your food. I've seen folks try to lift the lid with “camp pepper” (ash) when folks try to lift the lid some kind of fancy lever.

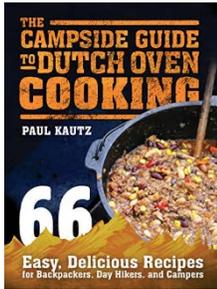
HERE'S HOW TO TURN UP THE HEAT

This simple formula will bring your Dutch oven to the correct temperature for baking without fail. It all depends on the number of charcoal briquettes you set on top of the lid and below the oven. Tear out this handy guide for future reference.



12-INCH DUTCH OVEN		
TEMP. °F	TOP	BOTTOM
300°	14	8
325°	15	9
350°	16	10
375°	17	11
400°	18	12
425°	19	13
450°	20	14
500°	21	15

The Campsite Guide to Dutch Oven Cooking



The cast iron Dutch oven is a classic workhorse for any camp cook, perfect for whipping up one-pot meals for breakfast, dinner, desserts, and beyond. Shared here in this compact, ready-made guide are 66 recipes and accompanying color photos that provide a delicious springboard for the new outdoor cook to launch his efforts at keeping fellow campers happily fed in the wild.

In addition to detailed and flavorful recipes, *The Campsite Guide to Dutch Oven Cooking* includes helpful advice on heating for different cooking styles, maintaining even cooking temperatures, cleaning and protecting your Dutch oven, and even tips on choosing the Dutch oven that's right for you. Readers will also find cooking hints and a list of useful accessories to ensure you have all the skills and tools to cook many easy outdoor meals.

Paperback: \$14, Kindle: \$10

Chainmail Scrubber for Cast Iron



Review by ScoutmasterCG, <http://scoutmastercg.com/cm-scrubber-for-cast-iron/>

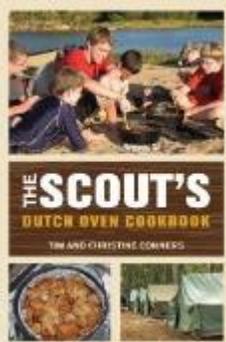
When you first see the CM Scrubber you'll probably say the same thing I did; "it's too expensive!" (Newsletter Editor: About \$18 from Amazon) But the next time you have a crusty dutch oven to clean you'll agree that it's worth every penny.

Put some water in the oven while it's still warm, and scrub away. The chain mail design won't scratch, and is very effective at lifting tough baked-on residue. No soap needed, cooked-on crud will clean up easily and you'll have a clean dutch oven pretty fast without worrying about damaging the seasoning.

From *Cooks Illustrated* (www.cooksillustrated.com/equipment_reviews/1346-chain-mail-scrubber?incode=MCSCZ00L0&ref=search_results_1) –

We passed this 4-inch square of stainless steel chain mail over a cast-iron pan encrusted with charred bits of sausage and another that we'd used for frying bacon. The linked steel rings effortlessly lifted away any stuck-on bits without damaging the pan's finish. The scrubber itself took some scrubbing to become completely grit- and oil-free for the next use, but it dried quickly and didn't rust. We're even fonder of our cast-iron skillet now that we have a faster, tidier cleanup tool.

Book – The Scout's Dutch Oven Cookbook



With camp cookery as popular as ever within Scouting, *The Scout's Dutch Oven Cookbook* continues the tradition founded in our pioneering past by focusing solely on the art of camp Dutch oven cooking. Whether you're hungry for a Big Timber Breakfast Casserole, Chicken Dutchiladas, Frazzleberry Pie, or anything in between, you'll find hundreds of camp-friendly options. Each recipe has been personally tested and approved by the authors and is accompanied by at-a-glance information about preparation time, challenge level, and servings. This is an all-in-one manual for Boy Scouts and their leaders, containing enough information to support a mastery of basic concepts for those new to Dutch oven cooking, while providing many challenges for advanced outdoor chefs.

Available from Amazon, \$11.50 paperback.

Get a Grip: Dutch Oven Lid Lifter Designs

Posted on 16 October 2008 by James Reuben Knowles, <http://jamesreubenknowles.com/lid-lifters-75>



One constant hazard for Dutch oven cooking is ash. Charcoal burns, producing ash. When it gets in the food... well, it ensures that people won't come back for more. Fortunately, learning to control ash isn't hard.

One of the easiest ways to control ash is with a good lid lifter. This will give greater control when handling a lid with coals and ash on top. There are two general designs of Dutch oven lid lifters. One thing that we quickly discovered is that different types of lid lifters behave differently.

We initially purchased a cast iron set that included a Camp Chef (pictured right). This has turned out to be better than most of the one-piece designs. Generally, these designs suffer from the fact that one has to play with balance and leverage a little to keep the lid from tipping ash into your food. Some people prefer this type, but most find the Mair design superior. Regardless of your preference, the Camp Chef lifter is essential for safely moving our larger frying pans, which have the loop opposite the handle for just this purpose.



The "Cadillac" of lid lifters, is the Mair lid lifter (pictured left). This design, while larger, allows you to solidly grip the lid tightly with negligible effort. It has four points of contact. Three legs sit on the lid, and a fourth is a hook that pulls the lid tightly against the three legs. The hook is operated by squeezing the hand grip. This eliminates the tricky balancing sometimes needed with the other designs. The drawback is that it is bigger and in some people's eyes cumbersome.

For quick tasks such as rotating an oven, I can agree that the smaller, simpler lid lifters are handy tools. When I want to control ash, such as when I want to remove the lid, I'm a bit of a "butter fingers" and prefer the solid grip of the Mair design.

Fortunately, all of the outdoor supply stores that I've been in have had both lids and lifters on display, and I've been able to play with both designs. I hope that you have that opportunity also. Regardless, neither lid lifter design carries a high price tag, and you'll not go wrong acquiring one of each.

Finding the Temperature Inside a Dutch Oven



There's lots of guidance on how many coals to put on a Dutch Oven to get the temperature you want. But how certain are you that it is actually working, that the coals are still heating it correctly?

For perfect temperature control each time, place an external grill temperature guide (usually around \$10) on the top of your oven (where the coals are), and cook. This thermometer will read correctly for the temperature inside the Dutch Oven.

Freezer Bag & Dehydrated Foods

Online Resource – Freezer Bag Cooking



Welcome to www.TrailCooking.com.

Spend any amount of time in the outdoors and you have probably found that mealtime is full of trade-offs. Do you choose foods that fuel your body or foods that satisfy your taste buds? Do you spend the extra time to prepare a real meal or grab a protein bar on the go?

Freezer Bag Cooking™ minimizes these trade-offs by changing the concepts of traditional outdoor food. It offers simplicity, convenience and variety, and then whirls them together with the philosophies of lightweight outdoor adventuring. The cooking gear needed is minimal, lightweight and can be bought, found or even made. Meals are prepared at home and put into zip top freezer bags. When ready to eat, the meal is prepared in and eaten out of the freezer bag. Mealtime becomes fast, effortless and cleanup is as easy as licking your utensil and sealing the zip top bag. Also, with meals portioned into individual freezer bags, making meals for multi-day trips, families or a group is painless.

So whether you like to be fancy with your food or keep it simple, Freezer Bag Cooking™ and our one pot recipes can be your ticket to better eating and enjoyment of your outdoor experience.

Freezer Bag Cooking: Adventure Ready Recipes



Author Sarah Kirkconnell (www.TrailCooking.com) has revised and expanded her excellent book Freezer Bag Cooking with the addition of many, many great new recipes.

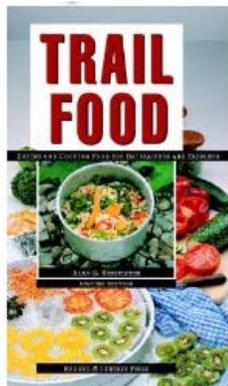
Freezer bag cooking is a simple technique that is perfect for Scouts, hot water is added to dry ingredients in freezer bag much like one adds hot water to a prepackaged freeze-dried meal. (No, this is not like boiling an omelet in a bag (don't) and there are no BPA worries with these techniques.) Directions are included in many of the recipes for adapting them to an insulated mug, or as a one-pot meal.

Some of the recipes require preparation at home, but most favorites are the ones where you throw the ingredients in a bag and head out on your camping or backpacking trip.

Most of the ingredients can be found in your local grocery store, but you'll expand your menu significantly using some of the vendors listed in the book (Sarah notes that Amazon (<http://amzn.to/1L3i6Mm>) has a lot of the less common ingredients too.)

Currently about \$10 for a Kindle version, a printed version is coming out soon.

Trail Food: Drying and Cooking Food for Backpacking and Paddling



Life in the outdoors revolves around food--cooking it, eating it, packing it, carrying it. We even fantasize about it, especially after a week of eating store-bought provisions. This book is all about fulfilling those food fantasies and avoiding those expensive disappointments. *Trail Food* tells you how to remove water from food, to make it lighter and longer-lasting, without removing its taste. Learn to plan menus and prepare meals just like the ones you left behind, using fresh foods from your garden or market, prepared and seasoned the way you like them.

The emphasis of this book is on drying individual ingredients and then rehydrating and combining them at meal time. This allows you to be more flexible in your meals, but takes a little longer at meal time. However, it also tells you how to use your own recipes to prepare a complete meal and then dehydrate it. Precooked spaghetti, rice or beans rehydrate and cook faster in the field. The book recommends having both types of meals with you for variety and flexibility. You can also dehydrate canned foods like vegetables or canned chicken, tuna or salmon and use them in your recipes.

Paperback, around \$7.

Products

Sweetwood Cattle Company Beef Jerky



This review is from the editors of *Backpacking Magazine* who set this product as one of their Editors' Choice in their 2013 Gear Guide.

Even the best bars and trail mix get mighty monotonous during a long trek. Get out of the snack-food rut with tender jerky from this Steamboat Springs-based cattle ranch. "It's the perfect pick-me-up on the trail—not dry or chewy like gas-station jerky—and packed full of flavor," says one tester, a food snob who polished off three bags in two days of hiking in Tasmania. What makes it different? Sweetwood uses fresh, whole-muscle pieces from Angus cows raised right on its premises (not ground-up scrap meat imported from South America, like most major jerky brands). Plus, Sweetwood jerky is baked, not dehydrated, which explains its moistness. The perfect blend of tender, hormone-free beef, brown sugar, salt, and bold (MSG-free) spices elicits a consistently smoky flavor that even had infrequent beef-eaters polishing off entire bags in one trailside break. The only problem? We couldn't agree on a favorite flavor. Regular, peppered, hot, and teriyaki all scored high marks.

URL: <https://sweetwood.com/>

Improved Instant Coffee



This review comes from Cool Tools (<http://kk.org/cooltools>) reviewer Oliver Hulland:

Since learning how to roast my own beans I have come to appreciate the broader art of coffee making. However, I don't always have time to roast coffee weekly or bring along my burr-grinder and kettle to brew a fresh cup. This is especially the case while camping and travelling.

The best solution I have found for caffeinating while abroad or on the go is Starbucks VIA instant coffee. Unlike the distasteful and often saccharine Nescafe instant coffee (among other brands), VIA tastes like freshly brewed coffee. I recently compared it to fresh brewed Starbucks and found that I actually preferred VIA to the fresher, darker brew (perhaps because food scientists at Starbucks have eliminated the Barista variable).

Not only does the VIA taste better than other instant brands, but it also dissolves better. The fine powder (described in the marketing as soluble micro-grounds) dissolves equally well in cold water as hot, allowing for instant iced coffee in the summer (or when I need to run out the door and don't have time to wait for the kettle to boil). Each packet is supposed to make a strong 8-oz cup, but I find that it tastes best when diluted in about 12-oz of water.

VIA comes in small foil packets that are very similar to the previously reviewed Smart Spice packets, and like the spices the individual foil packets keep the coffee fresh when compared to the larger containers of instant coffee. The form factor is incredibly small (4 grams per packet) and as such the folks at Backpacking Light swear by it as a replacement for camp coffee.

The only downside to VIA is its expense with each packet costing around 60 cents which when compared to Nescafe's 12 cents a cup seems a bit costly. However, it's still cheaper than buying a cup at the coffee shop, and probably on par with how much my beans cost from the store. Finally, I'd recommend that people stay away from the sweetened variety of VIA as they are more expensive, less compact, and not as good as the simpler stuff.

VIA represents a quantum leap in the quality of instant coffee I've tried, and I remain blown away that I find myself choosing instant coffee over fresh-brewed stuff. I highly recommend that people set aside any lingering instant coffee prejudice and try a cup for themselves.

Note: This is the coffee served at the Goose Creek Webelos-o-ree for the last 3 years, reviews on it have been great. We get ours from Costco (24 packs for around \$15).

Online Resource – PackItGourmet.com



Nothing beats a day spent in the outdoors, hiking, padding, climbing or cycling – and nothing makes it better than satisfying food for the belly! Packit Gourmet (www.PackItGourmet.com) delivers a whole new delicious alternative to the "fuel behind the reason" we all trek into the Great Outdoors!

Packit Gourmet meals allow you to start the day off right - with a delicious breakfast that will "jump start" your day; inventive quick-and-easy mid-day boosters to fuel you through the end of the day; and rich home-style comfort-food dinners to end the day not on JUST a positive note - but a resounding belly-rubbing Ahhhh!

Check out their Scouting Resources area for information on Scout Partnerships (15% off for all scout troops!), articles, helpful links and more.

Scout Skills

First Aid

Israeli Emergency Medical Bandage



A fairly recent development in first aid is the Israeli emergency medical bandage. It combines a sterile dressing, elastic wrap and a pressure bar to make a fast and easy to use trauma bandage. The long tail can be configured in various ways to hold the bandage in place or to immobilize the limb, plus it can be configured into an improvised tourniquet. Applying the bandage is quick and easy, much less finicky than applying and wrapping a traditional dressing. The bandage comes in 4" and 6" for around \$5-\$11.

Originally developed by the Israelis for military use it comes highly recommended from military medics and civilian paramedics.

The bandage is available from www.Amazon.com (search for Israeli Bandage) and www.Chinookmed.com (select Supplies → Bandages/Dressings).

Traditional CPR Technique Still Official



Recently there has been much discussion about the compression-only (or "hands-only") CPR technique. In the forthcoming months, this topic will be discussed by members of the National Boy Scouts of America's Health and Safety Committee, which oversees the BSA's health- and safety-related policies and procedures. This committee also works closely with the American Red Cross and its BSA liaison to help ensure that such policies and procedures are the most appropriate for Scouting.

The compression-only technique may be suitable for some emergency situations. It is not, however, an all-encompassing method for every CPR-related circumstance. For example, drowning victims will still require mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, because they do not have enough oxygen in their blood. In addition, the compression-only technique should not be used for infants and children. There are other situations where the compression-only technique should not be applied.

Should the BSA Health and Safety Committee make any modifications to the existing policy, the new information will be posted on this National Boy Scouts of America's Health and Safety website:

www.scouting.org/sitecore/content/Home/HealthandSafety/Alerts.aspx

Book – Pocket Naturalist® Guide Emergency First Aid



A pocket-sized guide packed with illustrations of first aid and lifesaving techniques. Includes sections on restoring breathing, moving injured patients, heat/cold exposure, and much more. Measures 3 1/2" x 8 1/4". Not a substitute for first aid and lifesaving training.

Available at ScoutStuff.org for \$6.95: <http://www.scoutstuff.org/pocket-naturalist-guide-emergency-first-aid-pocket-guide.html>

How to Prevent and Overcome Heat Exhaustion



From *Scouting* magazine, <http://scoutingmagazine.org/2015/04/how-to-survive-heat-exhaustion/>

Emergency Situation: You're hiking with some friends in July at Zion National Park. It's high noon when you begin to feel faint. Sweat pours down your forehead and into your eyes, causing you to stumble down the trail. You're dizzy. You open your canteen for a drink of water, but it's empty. Your pulse quickens, and then you collapse.

Solution: First, choose wisely when planning your summer hikes. Walking in the desert at noon puts you at a higher risk for overheating. If you must hike when it's hotter (noon versus early morning), always carry extra hydration and dress for the expected temperatures.

Now let's make a distinction: Heat exhaustion is different from heat stroke. This column deals with the former, which can lead to the latter — but they are not the same thing. Heat stroke is a serious condition that can be fatal and demands urgent hospital care. (Recovery requires immediate full-body cooling to avoid permanent brain injury or death.)

Heat exhaustion, while serious, can be field-treated in most cases if you know what you're doing.

Heat exhaustion is the body's way of telling you that it's water- and salt-depleted, typically because of excessive perspiration without proper replenishment. There are numerous signs of the condition: profuse sweating (as the body tries to cool itself), dizziness, fatigue and muscle cramps. Other signs might be less obvious: general confusion, very dark yellow (or even brownish) urine, nausea and a rapid heart rate.

The first step in treating heat exhaustion is to stop, sit and cool down. Next, move to a cool(er) place. If you're near a swimming hole or an air-conditioned building, go for it. It's more likely you're near an air-conditioned car: Use one, if it's close. If not, move to a shady spot (try a north-facing slope).

Once you cease activity, rehydrate slowly while removing tight-fitting clothing. Water is a good choice. But because heat exhaustion might also be caused by mineral depletion, electrolyte-enhanced sports drinks are also effective. If a banana is available, eat one for added mineral replenishment. Salt tablets can also be dissolved in water, but don't overdo it ... you're trying to rehydrate, not dehydrate. Rehydrate with a mouthful of liquid at a time. This should eventually lead to urination, a sign that the kidneys are functioning normally and the body is no longer fluid-depleted.

There are additional ways to treat heat exhaustion. Full-body immersion in cool water is ideal. If you have water to spare, cool the victim's skin with dampened T-shirts. Also, fanning speeds up the skin-cooling effects of sweating. Use a map, book, magazine or hat. A few people fanning the overheated hiker can be helpful.

Recovery times vary for heat exhaustion. Don't expect someone to take off down the trail after swallowing some Gatorade. Activity should be kept to a minimum. If you need to hike out, wait until it's cooler and then take your time.

Lyme Disease



The map below shows where Lyme is an issue when camping and hiking in the outdoors.

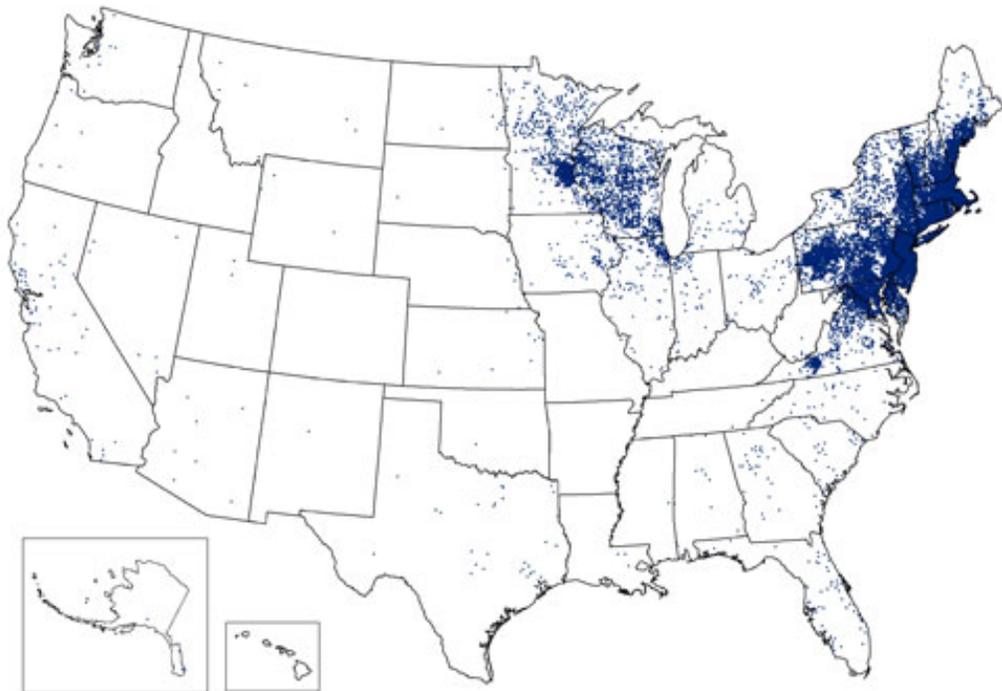
Consult this CDC website (<http://www.cdc.gov/lyme/>) for a comprehensive set of resources to better understand Lyme and how to prevent it.

This PDF document (http://www.cdc.gov/lyme/resources/toolkit/factsheets/10_508_Lyme%20disease_HikersCampers_FACTSheet.pdf) offers succinct advice for campers and hikers.

This FAQ site (<http://www.cdc.gov/lyme/faq/index.html>) is helpful for getting answers and clarification of common (mis)information.

This PDF brochure (<http://www.cdc.gov/lyme/resources/brochure/LymeDiseaseBrochure.pdf>) gives a detailed look at transmission, diagnosis and prevention.

Reported Cases of Lyme Disease -- United States, 2012



1 dot placed randomly within county of residence for each confirmed case

How to Build an Emergency Kit and Have What You Need



As we all know, emergencies come with little to no warning, so it's important to be ready to evacuate or shelter in place at a moment's notice. When disaster strikes, it's important to have your supplies already prepared. Even ordinary thunderstorms and winter storms—fairly common occurrences—may not be catastrophic, but can have devastating short-term impacts, such as loss of electricity or water for several days. Having a disaster supply kit can mitigate the impact of large and smaller-scale emergencies.

Getting the motivation to prepare an emergency kit may be a challenge when you are not faced with immediate danger. However, building an emergency kit could potentially save the lives of you and your family. Much like developing a family emergency plan, building an emergency kit can be a simple task if you know where to start.

FEMA's Ready.gov website provides a basic list of emergency supplies you can use to build kits (www.ready.gov/kit) to keep in your home, car, and office. Some of these supplies include:

- Water
- Non-perishable food
- Flashlight
- Batteries
- First aid kit
- Pliers
- Local maps

Before you begin building your kit, review your family emergency plan. Take those same questions you used to write your plan and apply them to developing your emergency kit list. When going through the list, look around for items you already have in your home and gather your supplies into a centralized location. Keep your list handy for when you are out on your shopping trips. You don't have to build your kit all at once.

You can also download and install the FEMA Mobile App (www.fema.gov/mobile-app) for your smartphone. This app contains emergency preparedness information, family communication plan templates, and an interactive emergency kit list. This interactive list allows you to check off the items you already have in your kit and add items to the list you and your family may need that are not on the basic list.

Once you've completed your basic supplies kit, consider items that may be more unique to you and your family's needs. Some examples include:

- Prescription medications
- Extra eye glasses or contact lenses
- Infant formula and diapers
- Pet food

America's PrepareAthon! - Be hurricane ready



With the start of the Atlantic hurricane season now is a good time to begin discussing hurricane risk and preparing for the tropical storm season that ends in late November. Be sure to have a plan, be informed, be prepared for a power outage, and know your evacuation plan.

1. **Have a plan:** You may not be with your loved ones when disaster strikes, so have a Family Emergency Communication Plan (www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/94715) in place so you know how to reach each other and where to meet up when conditions are safe.
2. **Be informed:** Download the FEMA mobile app (www.fema.gov/mobile-app) for disaster resources, weather alerts, and safety tips. The app provides a customizable checklist of emergency supplies, maps of open shelters and recovery centers, disaster survival tips, and weather alerts from the National Weather Service. The app also enables users to receive push notifications reminding them to take important steps to prepare their homes and families for disasters.
3. **Be prepared for a power outage:** If you or anyone in your household depends on medical devices that are powered by electricity, make those items a first priority. Talk to your medical equipment company to find out what will happen to your equipment during a power outage. FEMA recommends each person has at least a three-day supply of extra batteries for your flashlights, radios, and other devices run on battery power. Visit this webpage (www.ready.gov/power-outage) for information.
4. **Know your community's evacuation plans:** Many communities have designated "evacuation routes" and some even have evacuation zones. You will want to be familiar with these so that if your local authorities issue an evacuation order, you'll know exactly where to go.

America's PrepareAthon! is a year round, grassroots, community-based campaign to increase national preparedness. Visit their webpage (www.ready.gov/prepare) to read about preparedness stories, find events in your area, access customizable resources, and register your preparedness activities. Visit the DHS Office of Emergency Preparedness website (<http://dhsconnect.dhs.gov/org/comp/mgmt/OEP/Pages/default.aspx>) or FEMA's www.Ready.gov for more information on other hazards, family planning, emergency kits, and becoming involved in your community.

Ways to Stop Mosquito Bites from Itching



Mosquito bites. They itch and itch and itch until you just can't take it anymore. Scratching solves one problem, yet scratching releases more histamines in the body, which makes the bite itch more. One bite is annoying, several can be miserable, hundreds over the course of a few months can actually help you build an immunity to their saliva, but probably not the best way to get rid of the itch.

So how can you get the itching to stop while at camp without a nearby drugstore? Here are some surefire ways to stop the itching from mosquito bites:

- Dr. Oz says a dab of honey applied to the site can sooth skin because it is a natural antibiotic. It can also prevent infections if you have scratched your bite open with fingernails that aren't clean.
- Apple cider vinegar also has anti-itch benefits due to the acidity in the vinegar. Once pressed against the wound, the acidic liquid will reduce swelling and take away that huge urge to scratch.
- Garlic is a proven remedy due to its chemical properties, though you can also make matters worse. Rubbing a clove of garlic directly on an open site can result in severe stinging and burning.
- Sounds strange, but doctors also say using the inside of a pulpy banana peel can be an appealing way to get rid of the itch, when applied directly on a bite thanks to the peel's oils.
- Toothpaste is another trick to take the itch out of mosquito bites. A small amount on the bite can provide hours of relief due to toothpaste's anti-inflammatory properties and ingredients like menthol and baking soda.
- A bar of wet soap may be your new best friend if you're itching. The chemicals and fat in soap can be soothing, dry out the bite and reduce the need to itch. Rub it over the affected area and wait a few hours before removing.
- Or grab that roll-on antiperspirant for a quick fix. The aluminum chloride salts usually found there will help absorb the fluid in the mosquito bite, and itching goes away.
- Another interesting home remedy that many swear by? Apply a small piece of Scotch Tape to the bite. From here some find it works best to leave it on for a few hours- something about closing off the air to the site reduces itching- while others simply very gently remove it directly after applying, which helps remove some of the mosquito saliva that is the heart of the itchy problem. Best to do this as soon as possible after receiving the bite.

How do You Handle Prescription Medication on Scout Trips?



Wrapped up in a weekend of camping, climbing or canoeing, a Scout could forget to take his prescription medication. And that could be a problem.

In some packs, troops, teams, posts, ships or crews, a leader volunteers to make sure the Scouts or Venturers take medication at the appropriate time. The BSA, for its part, leaves this responsibility to the person taking the medication and/or that person's parent or guardian. However, a leader — “after obtaining all the necessary information” — could, if he or she chooses, take on the job of making sure a youth takes his or her medication at the appropriate time.

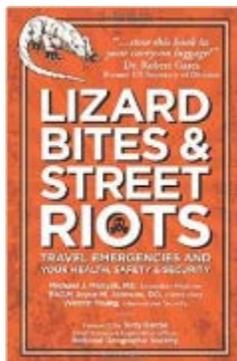
BSA camps may have their own policies that go further than this, and that's fine. States may have laws that are even more limiting, and those supersede all other policies.

So what does your unit do about prescription medication on Scout trips?

Do leaders take on this responsibility, or are the Scouts and Venturers themselves responsible? If leaders agree to handle it, how do they ensure that medications are taken on time? If medication must be kept cold, how do you accomplish that on longer outings where refrigeration isn't available?

To see how other units handle this issue check out this *Bryan On Scouting* article: <http://blog.scoutingmagazine.org/2015/09/15/prescription-medication-on-scout-trips/>

Book – Lizard Bites



As a Distinguished Eagle Scout, Michael J. Manyak knows a thing or two about being prepared. He's turned those skills into a career in medicine, specifically expedition medicine.

He's such an authority on preventing and treating travel emergencies, in fact, that he has consulted the National Geographic Society, USA Today, the Peace Corps and NASA on the very subject.

Now, with his new book *Lizard Bites & Street Riots — Travel Emergencies and Your Health, Safety, and Security*, Manyak shares those lifesaving lessons with the public.

Think of it as a reference book for the worst that life can throw at you while you're away from home. I'm talking abdominal pain, bedbugs, civil unrest, insect and spider bites, hypothermia and frostbite, Ebola and viral diseases, wild-animal bites, heat exhaustion and heat stroke, airline hijackings, taxi fraud, theft, lost documents, and so much more.

There's a reason BSA president and former defense secretary Robert M. Gates says to “stow this book in your carry-on luggage.” When you need it, you really need it.

The hardcover book is available now for \$22.95 at ScoutStuff.org. And, according to the Huffington Post, this is “... a travel book that might just save your life.”

FEMA Mobile Application



FEMA has added a new feature to its free app that will enable users to receive weather alerts from the National Weather Service for up to five locations across the nation. This new feature allows users to receive alerts on severe weather happening anywhere they select in the country, even if the phone is not located in the area, making it easy to follow severe weather that may be threatening family and friends.

The new weather alert feature adds to the app's existing features to help Americans through emergencies. In addition to this upgrade, the app also provides a customizable checklist of emergency supplies, maps of open shelters and Disaster Recovery Centers, and tips on how to survive natural and manmade disasters. The FEMA app also offers a "Disaster Reporter" feature, where users can upload and share photos of disaster damage.

Some other key features of the app include:

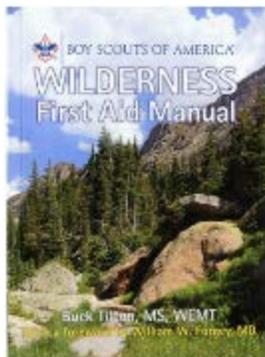
- Safety Tips: Tips on how to stay safe before, during, and after over 20 types of hazards, including floods, hurricanes, tornadoes and earthquakes
- Disaster Reporter: Users can upload and share photos of damage and recovery efforts
- Maps of Disaster Resources: Users can locate and receive driving directions to open shelters and disaster recovery centers
- Apply for Assistance: The app provides easy access to apply for federal disaster assistance

The latest version of the FEMA app is available for free in the App Store for Apple devices and Google Play for Android devices. Users who already have the app downloaded on their device should download the latest update for the weather alerts feature to take effect. The new weather alerts feature in the FEMA app does not replace Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) function available on many new smartphones. WEAs have a special tone and vibration and are sent for emergencies such as extreme weather, AMBER alerts, or Presidential Alerts.

To learn more about the FEMA app, visit:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BxBdhLtNuxM&feature=youtu.be>

Book – BSA® Wilderness First Aid Manual



Developed in conjunction with the BSA® curriculum for standardized wilderness first-aid training, this handy pocket-sized guide is a vital resource for back-country travel. Author Buck Tilton, with more than 39 years of experience in outdoor health and safety, is the cofounder of the Wilderness Medicine Institute of the National Outdoor Leadership School in Wyoming. Just one of his many FalconGuides, this manual addresses a comprehensive listing of both routine and emergency health crises. Required for adult leadership at high-adventure bases.

Available at ScoutStuff.org for \$4.95: www.scoutstuff.org/bsar-wilderness-first-aid-manual.html

The Importance of Hydration



When the well is dry, we know the worth of water. – Benjamin Franklin, *Poor Richard's Almanac*

So you're four or five miles down the trail and you've been better. The day started off nice enough – birds singing, beams of sunshine coming through the trees, all was right with the world. Now, it's several hours later, the day has turned hot and humid and the trail is more gnarly than you thought it would be.

Your breathable, fast drying shirt is soaked with sweat, your head hurts, you find yourself frequently tripping over rocks, and you're weary and irritable. What to do? Stop, rest and drink. You're probably dehydrated. Dehydration can sneak up on any of us, at any time. It's more acute in extreme weather, either heat or cold, but can happen in any climate. A person can live for three days without water but that's only a guideline. The truth is that in a hot, arid climate, dehydration can turn fatal in as little as one day. And, in a cold climate, dehydration intensifies the onset and severity of hypothermia.

Water is essential to human life. Every bodily system we have depends on it to function properly. Our bodies are constantly using water to digest food, regulate our temperature, lubricate joints and filter blood along with many other critical tasks. Yet, every time that we breathe, we lose water.

Drinking water is the single best thing that you can do to maintain top form in the outdoors. Even slight to moderate dehydration will result in decreased physical performance, headaches, irritability; decreased mental capacity and reduced heat regulation. Drink early and often. Drink like your life depends on it, because it does.

How Much is Enough?

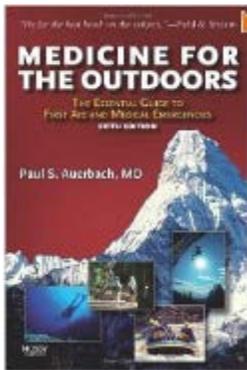
Try to pre-hydrate, that is, drink water before you start an activity. One half to one liter of water is a good start, and then drink small amounts often throughout the activity. Don't rely on a feeling of thirst to drink. Make it a habit. If you aren't watering the weeds regularly and your urine isn't mostly clear, you aren't drinking enough water. There isn't an exact formula to determine how much water a person needs. There are just too many variables – exertion levels, climate and body mass to name a few. But, most expert opinions seem to fall within this range:

- One to two liters per day just to replace water lost to normal body functions.
- Two to four liters per day to maintain hydration during moderate activity.
- Four to eight liters per day to maintain hydration during strenuous exertion.

The dry air common to high altitudes will also exacerbate dehydration. Even normal respiration while at rest in this environment results in a significant amount of lost water.

It is possible to drink too much water, a condition known as hyponatremia. This is a condition where a normal level of sodium in the blood is lowered to a dangerous level by the combination of sweating and excessive water intake. The common sense approach to preventing this is to eat some salty snacks when engaged in activity that produces heavy perspiration and perhaps including the occasional sports drink with your water.

Book – Medicine for the Outdoors

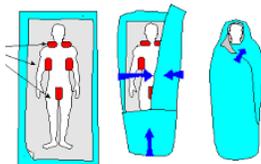


Since 1986, *Medicine for the Outdoors: The Essential Guide to First Aid and Medical Emergency, 5th Edition* has been hailed as the definitive take-along manual on the subject. Packed with step-by-step instructions, how-to explanations, and practical approaches to outdoor and wilderness emergencies, it tells you the best ways to respond to just about any medical problem when help is miles or days away. Author Paul S. Auerbach, MD, MS, FACEP, FAWM, is recognized as one of the world's leading authorities on wilderness medicine. This 5th edition features major updates to bring you the latest on emerging infectious diseases...the most current drug and dosage information...an increased emphasis on making do with the materials at hand...and much more. Logically organized, easy to reference, and simple to understand, *Medicine for the Outdoors* may literally save your life. When you're venturing into mountains, deserts, forests, jungles, or out to sea, it belongs in your duffel or backpack!

- Provides the most diverse and comprehensive coverage of medical conditions related to the outdoors.
- Offers logical and complete explanations of every topic.
- Includes numerous drawings and instructions to enhance your understanding of the descriptive material.
- Contains recommendations for injury and illness prevention.
- Features a comprehensive index that helps you locate answers quickly.
- Offers an increased emphasis on making do with the materials at hand (like using a fanny pack as a cervical collar).
- Presents the latest guidance on dangerous infections like methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA), avian flu, and West Nile virus.
- Offers current and accurate drug and dosage information via careful updates throughout.
- Provides new safety recommendations on avalanches, forest fires, bear attacks, and more.
- Demonstrates how to apply various bandages and splints with the aid of brand-new drawings.

Available from Amazon for about \$20. Overall review is 4.6 out of 5 stars.

The Hypo Wrap



As we are now preparing for Winter Camping it is always good to start with First Aid for Cold Weather injuries, prevention, and treatment.

The Hypowrap is a good way to prevent hypothermia and certainly the start of hypothermia treatment.

Hypothermia is an extremely dangerous condition where the victim or casualty's core body temperature drops below 95 degrees (F). The persons condition can deteriorate rapidly so a prompt response is required.

The hypo wrap puts the person in a state where he can begin warming using insulation and his body heat. It is important to note the end of this process will lead to the hospital and professional medical attention.

The Scoutmaster Minute Blog

(<https://thescoutmasterminute.net/2016/11/20/hypowrap/>) has a presentation on how to do this.

Knots and Pioneering

Online Resource – Pioneering Projects

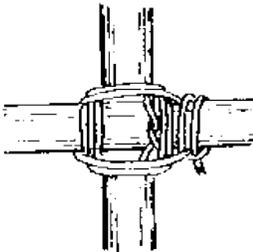


In 1996, Ron Crabb, the then editor of Scouting magazine (UK), commissioned a series of articles on basic Scouting skills and decided that Scout Troops should be encouraged to rediscover pioneering projects and activities. The basic idea was to produce a set of pioneering instructions for a selection of Scout pioneering projects that would aid a Scouter with little or no experience to achieve the successful build of a pioneering structure for the Boy and Girl Scouts.

The authors of **Pioneering Made Easy** (www.PioneeringMadeEasy.co.uk) have rummaged through all the books they could lay their hands on, from John Sweet's Scout Pioneering and John Thurman's Fun with Pioneering Ropes and Spars to line sketches in the old PLs Handbook. They added a few original designs and some sent to them by Scouters around the country after the articles began appearing in the magazine.

Pioneering Made Easy is being well received by the Scouting pioneering community across the world.

Online Resource – Knot Resources



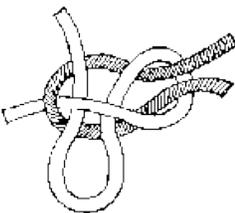
www.Knoopenzo.nl (Knots etc.) is a Dutch website run by Theo Slijkerman, a member of the International Guild of Knot Tyers (www.IGKT.net).

The website has a number of very interesting knotting resources, including calculators for working out the amount of rope needed for a rope mat (file idk103), a turks head (file idk108), and a braided ring (file idk118).

For pioneering, his square lashing calculator (file knt71) is pretty handy. Given the diameter of both poles (D_p and D_b), and the thickness of the lashing rope (D_t), it will calculate the length of rope needed.

At the moment the website is only in Dutch but the author has used many illustrations so even if you can't read the text, you can follow the examples.

Online Resource – Knots



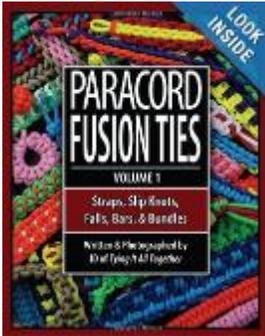
Stormdrane's Blog (<http://Stormdrane.blogspot.com/>) is a site with posted photos of his hobby (knots) and where he shares some ideas on things he has learned to make by using decorative and useful knots. If you want to learn, there are informative links throughout the blog for books and online learning resources. If you have trouble figuring a knot out, have patience and keep trying. Click 'Older Posts' at the bottom of the last post on each page or search the 'Archive' for more.

Online Resource – ScoutPioneering



Larry Green's <http://ScoutPioneering.com> is a new pioneering website, and is already full of great resources, with extensive information on BSA Pioneering badge requirements, new projects, and technical advice. Larry is constantly adding new information. One of the best parts of the site is a set of projects suitable for a troop night meeting. The website has email subscriptions, and an RSS feed you can follow, so head over and subscribe.

Book – Paracord Fusion Ties



J.D. Lenzen is the creator of the highly acclaimed YouTube channel "*Tying It All Together*", and the producer of over 200 instructional videos. He's been formally recognized by the International Guild of Knot Tyers (IGKT) for his contributions to knotting, and is the originator of fusion knotting--the creation of innovative knots through the merging of different knot elements or knotting techniques.

Paracord Fusion Ties - Volume 1 is the first of a multiple volume set of books exclusively utilizing paracord for his fusion knotting techniques. Originally used as parachute suspension lines during World War II, paracord has since become a means to create an immeasurable variety of useful items, survival tools, and decorative ties. Lenzen guides readers through 35 different paracord fusion ties, all of which have never been presented in book form before. By way of over 800 crisp, clear, full-color photographs, coupled with succinctly written, easy to follow step-by-step instructions, he will show you how to create spherical ties, bars and bracelets, key fobs, medallions, straps, rapid deployment ties, falls, and more.

Paracord Fusion Ties - Volume 2 is the second installment in the paracord fusion ties book series. Like Volume 1, Volume 2 reveals innovative and stylish ways of storing paracord for later use. So once again you'll find crisp, clear, full-color photographs (over 950 in all!), coupled with succinctly written, easy to follow step-by-step instructions for bracelets, straps, and key fobs, as well as medallions and other storage ties that will keep your paracord on-hand and ready for deployment. It also provides directions for ties and techniques that represent the next level in paracording knowledge--the making of practical paracord objects.

Primarily designed to provide survival and/or tactical advantages, practical paracord objects are in themselves useful. That is, they provide benefits to those who tie them, in real time; as opposed to when they're unraveled and the cord within them used. Examples of the practical paracord objects in Volume 2 include: Bush Sandals, Emergency Snow Goggles, No-Slip Machete Grip, Single-Cord Rock Sling, and more; including pouches, baskets, secret compartment fobs, and tactical ties.

Both books are available from Amazon (paperback, about \$18 each). Each has received 4.5 to 5 stars in their reviews.

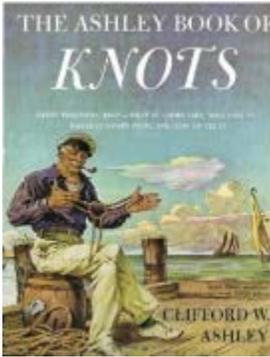
'CatDrill' - Quick Pioneering with Pre-drilled Poles and Light Synthetic Cord



'CatDrill' is an Italian technique for staving or lightweight pioneering, that involves preparing the staves to be used by drilling a small hole and notching the surface of the pole. Lightweight synthetic kernmantle rope is then used to tie the staves together, using stopper knots on the starting end of the rope, and simple slipped hitches to end the lashings. The technique saves time, produces strong structures and is worth investigating if you have some light staves/laths you can set aside for this technique.

International Catdrill's English website (<https://trento1.wordpress.com/international-cat-drill/>) has a series of PDF documents that guide you through the basics, from preparing your poles, to the different types of lashings, and some basic projects. The original, Italian site (<https://trento1.wordpress.com/tecnica-cat-drill/>) has some more projects that are not yet translated into English, but the pictures speak for themselves.

Book – The Ashley Book of Knots



The Ashley Book of Knots (c.1944) by Clifford W. Ashley, is the definitive reference work on knots, splices, and rope work in general. Born in 1881 in New Bedford, Massachusetts, Clifford W. Ashley was an antique dealer and artist, who spent eleven years writing his magnum opus and died three years after its 1944 publication.

In his pursuit of ropework, Mr. Ashley spent six months at sea on the whaling bark *SUNBEAM*; and six weeks on a Delaware Bay oysterman called a 'bugeye'. He interviewed tradesmen, such as: steeplejacks, cobblers, truck drivers, butchers, electric linesmen, and Boy Scouts as well as sailors and sea captains to document each nuance of knot unique to its trade. He was taught a few knots by Mr. Ringling himself of circus fame; and taught a knot to Mr. DuPont, a captain of industry.

The result of Mr. Ashley's research was a significant collection of 7,000 drawings of 3,900 knots and their application in a 620 page knot tyers tome which has become a veritable bible for rope workers the world over. In just about any capacity that a rope can be utilized has found its way into the book. Mr. Ashley has covered: netting, lashings, block & tackle, splices, hitches, and bends. He went from purely decorative knots with no practical value to knots applied to industrial use. He included a whole chapter on rope tricks and puzzles. There is an amusing catalog of small figures the author drew to rate the quality of each knot described, such as a deuce of clubs to designate 'unimportance', or a kedge anchor to indicate 'reliability'.

Equally important as the knot's description was their utilization on incidental equipment. Mr. Ashley fortuitously included a description of a rope's application on fairleads, belaying pins, H-bitts, cleats, thumb-cleats, fife rails, pin rails, pin racks, and timberheads; as well as esoteric equipment such as euphroe blocks and crows foots.

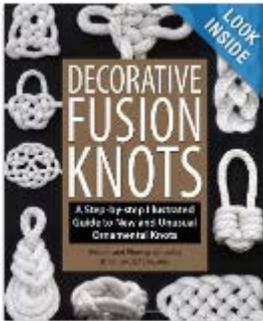
The book also includes the important distinction between the kevel (or cavil) and the quarter cleat. The glossary in the back makes another refinement by distinguishing the knot from the sinnet, splice, hitch, and bend. Thus clearing up any misassumptions in knot application (such as that Knot Theory is a branch of pure mathematics and has nothing to do with Knot Tying!) - *The Ashley Book of Knots* settles any disputes in nomenclature.

The only shortcoming to this significant work is that the drawings are unclear and vague in some instances, making it impossible to tie a knot in the example given. The book is dated in respect to splicing modern power braids such as Liquid Crystal Polymer, Spectra, or Kevlar; and makes no mention of the type of knot or splice found in an Astronaut's tether.

Still this can be tolerated in view of the wealth of information and history on knots, splices, and rope contained within its pages. And *The Ashley Book of Knots* has gained a further importance in its power of verification.

Cost is around \$52, hardcover. The Amazon rating for this book is 4.8 stars out of 220 reviews.

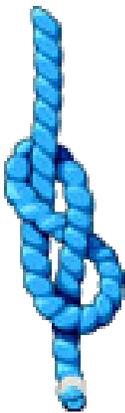
Book – Decorative Fusion Knots



Respected internationally for his knotting skills and clear, concise video and book presentations, J. D. Lenzen shows how to tie knots like no others. Just as origami figurines are created through the merging of different folding techniques, he creates new knots by combining historical knot elements and new knotting techniques. The product of this intermingling is what he calls a fusion knot -- a brand new genre of knot in a centuries-old tradition. It is rare for a knot book to feature even one brand new, never-before-seen knot, but *Decorative Fusion Knots* features more than 20 brand-new knots created by the author. *Decorative Fusion Knots* is the culmination of ten years of study, practice, and creation. The knots within were inspired by history, nature, mythology, and more. Many of these incredible knots have never been presented or described publicly, until now. Never before has a knot book presented a step-by-step format to tying brand new knots like this in full-color. Alongside fusion knots, this book presents logical and comprehensive instructions for a plethora of historical knots, including Celtic knots, Chinese decorative knots, maritime knots, and popular paracord ties. Each historical knot instruction is presented in step-by-step fashion. Each of the 600 step-by-step color photographs is accompanied with clear, concise instructional captions. Whether you're a sailor, teacher, jewelry maker, survivalist, general knot enthusiast, or just looking for bush crafts, paracord ties, a curriculum for students, or a fun way to pass the time, *Decorative Fusion Knots* is the book for you. With easy-to-understand captions and clear step-by-step photos, readers can learn at their own pace, review whole techniques at a single glance and simply lay the book flat on the table and follow along as they tie.

Available from Amazon, \$14 paperback, \$10 Kindle. Has 4.5 out of 5 stars with 111 reviews in.

Learn the Ropes



Flemish Bend? Easy peasy. Monkey's Fist? Gotcha covered. Thanks to some ingenious apps, even the more complicated knots can be conquered. Here are three apps to help you get the bugs out of your Gnat Hitch.

Animated Knot by Grog

From the Albright Knot to the Zeppelin Bend, this app shows you how to master mega-bunches of knots, arranged in categories including Basic, Boating, Fishing, Scouting and more. Grog also give you detailed descriptions of each knot's uses, advantages and disadvantages. Its motto? *"Better to know a knot and not need it, than need a knot and not know it."* \$4.99 for iOS and Android.

How to Tie Knots 3D

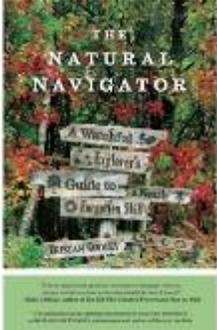
This 3-D animated app wants to be your "personal assistant" in learning more than 45 essential knots. Animated step-by-step directions – "Cross the running end over itself to make a small loop" – shed plenty of light on the subject. \$1.99 for iOS, free for Android.

Knots 3D

Good pause and speed controls for rotational views make this app a standout way to learn more than 90 knots. You'll find brief histories of the knots and explanations of some unusual knot names, and you can use your finger to spin the knot and see how it looks from any angle in 3-D. 99 cents for iOS and Android.

Orienteering / Geocaching

Book – The Natural Navigator: A Watchful Explorer's Guide to a Nearly Forgotten Skill



Before GPS, before the compass, and even before cartography, humankind was navigating. Now this singular guide helps us rediscover what our ancestors long understood—that a windswept tree, the depth of a puddle, or a trill of birdsong can help us find our way, if we know what to look and listen for. Adventurer and navigation expert Tristan Gooley unlocks the directional clues hidden in the sun, moon, stars, clouds, weather patterns, lengthening shadows, changing tides, plant growth, and the habits of wildlife. Rich with navigational anecdotes collected across ages, continents, and cultures, *The Natural Navigator* will help keep you on course and open your eyes to the wonders, large and small, of the natural world.

Available from Amazon (hardcover) for \$12. Has 4.6 stars out of 5 stars from 8 reviewers

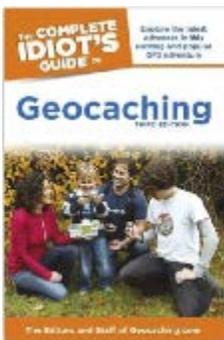
Online Resource – ScoutOrienteering



www.ScoutOrienteering.com is a site dedicated to promote orienteering within the Scouting community and to see it utilized in a manner that teaches map skills, self-reliance, leadership, and physical conditioning.

The site lists upcoming orienteering events for Scouts and offers a four-day lesson plan for teaching orienteering and information on understanding maps and map symbols.

Book - The Complete Idiot's Guide to Geocaching



There's nothing quite like geocaching. What other activity utilizes GPS satellites orbiting thousands of miles above the earth to find hidden treasure? And with new technological advances and other exciting developments, geocaching is more appealing than ever.

Completely revised and updated with latest changes to the game, this helpful guide gives you a sure path from start to geocaching success. In it, you get:

Pointers for getting started, including how to play the game and prepare for your amazing adventures.

Tips for navigating Geocaching.com and selecting a geocache, plus advice on finding it -and leaving your own for others to find.

A primer on GPS technology and best devices - including your smart phone - to use as you set out on your adventure.

An introduction to the global geocaching community and tips for meeting like-minded treasure hunters.

Information on the exciting opportunities Geotours and Geocaching Challenges offer for vacations or corporate team building.

In paperback for about \$12, and for Kindle \$10.

Top 5 Best Buys on Geocaching Guides



1. Complete Idiot's Guide to Geocaching

The *Complete Idiot's Guide to Geocaching* was written by GPS expert Jack Peters and may be the most recommended book for beginning geocachers. Peters is also an editor for Geocaching.com, a website that has cultivated THE perfect geocache niche and become the best and most used geocaching site on the Web. From www.Geocaching.com: "The *Complete Idiot's Guide® to Geocaching* is a comprehensive, yet entertaining and easy-to-understand book for getting started and having fun with geocaching."

2. Geocaching: Hike and Seek with Your GPS (English)

Geocaching: Hike and Seek with Your GPS by experienced geocacher Erik Sherman is a big 224 page book that offers both information on the technology and some very interesting "tips" and "tricks" when hunting and hiding the cache. Hike and Seek overviews the sport and the technology, describes various cache types and gives great advice when "On the Hunt" and "In Hiding" the geocache. Although the book is about geocaching Sherman weaves his outdoor experiences into fun stories.

3. Geocaching for Dummies

The "Dummies" series of books are always loaded with good information on every subject they take on. Geocaching is no exception. Joel McNamara's 231 page guide on Geocaching follows the "Dummies" format and gets you all the necessary technical GPS information in easily digestible chapters. He uses a lighthearted but not lightweight approach to even the most complex parts of Geocaching and reinforces it with lists and cheat sheets.

4. Essential Guide to Geocaching (English)

The *Essential Guide To Geocaching: Tracking Treasure With Your GPS* is a book written by professional cartographer and geographer Mike Dyer. Dyer's book provides a great start for the geocache beginner with a broad overview of the sport, but the book also has much material included to educate even the expert geocacher. The book features easy step-by-step checklists, a glossary of terms, and a resource listing of GPS manufacturers and geocache organizations.

5. The Geocaching Handbook (English)

Written by Layne Cameron, *The Geocaching™ Handbook* is a 128 page paperback written to serve as a complete introduction to Geocaching. The forward is actually written by Dave Ulmer, the inventor of the sport of Geocaching. As you would expect, *Geocaching Handbook* includes an introduction to GPS technology and receivers. Other chapters cover creating and maintaining caches, geo games, ethics and safety in the backwoods, available organizations, clubs and websites, and Cachinary 1.0.

Online Resource – FamilyGeocaching.com



www.FamilyGeocaching.com is a family run site that talks about geocaching as a family with kids. It contains tips on getting started with geocaching and news of fun family geocache events.

Online Resource – Geocaching.com

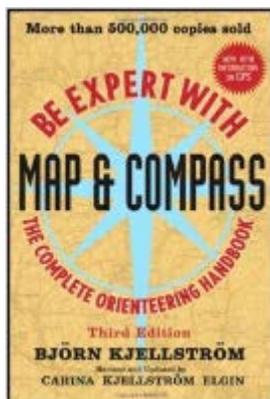


On May 2, 2000, at approximately midnight, eastern savings time, the great blue switch controlling selective availability was pressed. Twenty-four satellites around the globe processed their new orders, and instantly the accuracy of GPS technology improved tenfold. Tens of thousands of GPS receivers around the world had an instant upgrade.

For the first few months, geocaching was confined to existing experienced GPS users who already used the technology for outdoor activities such as backpacking and boating. Most users had an existing knowledge of GPS and a firm grasp of obscure lingo like datums and WGS84. Due to both the player base and the newness of the activity, players had a steep learning curve before going out on their first cache hunt. Tools were scarce for determining whether a cache was nearby, if one existed at all.

After experiencing the thrill of finding his first cache, Jeremy Irish, a web developer for a Seattle company, decided to start a hobby site for the activity. Adopting the term geocaching, he created www.Geocaching.com and applied his professional web skills to create tools to improve the cache-hunting experience. The site not only contains listing of local geocaching groups, a blog, discussion forums, and a place where you can enter your zip code and get a listing of local caches with beginner caches highlighted in green.

Book - Be Expert with Map and Compass



GPS devices are great, but they can break, get lost, or easily be hampered by weather conditions, making basic map and compass skills essential for anyone who spends time outdoors. This popular, easy-to-use orienteering handbook has been helping people find their way for more than fifty years. Now updated to include information on GPS as well as current Web sites, references, sources, and photographs, it remains the book of choice for professional outdoorsmen, novice orienteers, and outdoor organizations as well as teachers, scout leaders, recreational hikers, hunters, and others around the world.

Coverage includes understanding map symbols; traveling by map alone, by compass alone, or by map and compass together; finding bearings; sketching maps; and traveling in the wilderness.

- Explains basic map and compass skills clearly
- Fully updated edition, including information on GPS
- Includes up-to-date Web site addresses, references, and sources
- Features a fresh, rugged design
- Ideal book for beginners

If you're looking to feel more comfortable in the wilderness, this updated guide is an indispensable reference

Available in both paperback and Kindle for \$11-13 (Note: the Kindle version does not have the map that is often referred to in the text).

Hosting a Cub Scout Geocaching Event



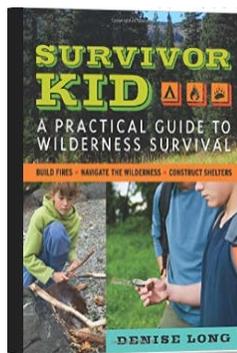
If your pack would like to host a geocaching event, and if you look at the new Cub Scout program coming you'll see that geocaching is part of it, then we suggest you look at GeoCaching.com's guidebook which can be found at:

http://cubscoutideas.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Adventure_Kit_Boy_Scouts.pdf .

You might also like to check the article at <http://cubscoutideas.com/1913/how-to-host-a-cub-scout-geocaching-event/>

Wilderness Survival

Survivor Kid: A Practical Guide to Wilderness Survival



Anyone can get lost while camping or on a hike and *Survivor Kid* teaches young adventurers the survival skills they need if they ever find themselves lost or in a dangerous situation in the wild.

Written by a search and rescue professional and lifelong camper, it s filled with safe and practical advice on building shelters and fires, signaling for help, finding water and food, dealing with dangerous animals, learning how to navigate, and avoiding injuries in the wilderness. Ten projects include building a simple brush shelter, using a reflective surface to start a fire, testing your navigation skills with a treasure hunt, and casting animal tracks to improve your observation skills.

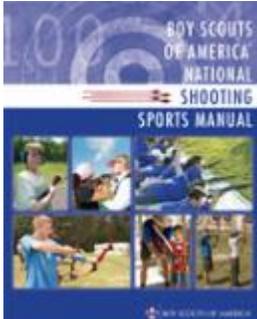
Here are the chapters from the book:

1. Anyone Can Get Lost (And what to do if it happens to you)
2. Building a Shelter
3. Finding Water
4. Signaling for Help
5. Building a Fire
6. Avoiding Dangerous Animals
7. Getting The Best of Bugs
8. Dealing with Extreme Weather
9. Finding Food
10. Learning to Navigate
11. What To Do if You or Someone Else is Injured
12. Packing a Survival Kit

Paperback, around \$9.

Other

Manual –National Shooting Sports



The National Shooting Sports Task Force has just completed the new Boy Scouts of America National Shooting Sports Manual for Cub Scouting, Boy Scouting, and Venturing. Reference material for all levels were put into this one Shooting Sports Manual.

This manual will be a great resource for Council Shooting Sports Committees, Camp Leadership, and Unit Leaders. The manual will help provide a safe environment for youth participating in shooting sports activities.

You can view the manual online in pdf format here:

www.Scouting.org/Filestore/Outdoor%20Program/pdf/30931_WB.pdf
available in most major book stores, both online and at retail stores.

Download Paddle Ready, a Free App Just for Paddlers



Here's one time when water and smartphones do, in fact, mix.

Paddle Ready, a new app available now for iPhone and Android, helps Scouters improve their unit's safety on the water.

The app comes from the American Canoe Association, but don't be fooled by that name. The agency offers great resources for kayaking, rafting and stand-up paddleboarding, in addition to canoeing.

The Boy Scouts of America and the ACA are partner agencies and work closely together on paddlesports programs. ACA serves on the BSA's Aquatics Task Force, and the BSA serves on ACA's paddlesports committee. ACA help BSA establish standards, improve training and develop programs.

The Paddle Ready app is the latest in a long list of great moments in the partnership. Paddle Ready allows users to:

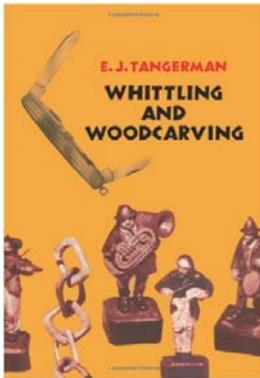
- Complete a float plan and email it to friends.
- Find an ACA instructor or course near you.
- Get real-time environmental coverage plus weather conditions for various paddling environments, and save your favorite paddling routes for quick reference.
- Search for boating organizations and offices by state.
- Have paddle safety checklists for various paddling environments at your fingertips.
- Use the safety and rescue how-to videos to keep your knowledge current.

iPhone: <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/paddle-ready/id905966259?mt=8>

Android:

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=org.americancanoe.paddleready>

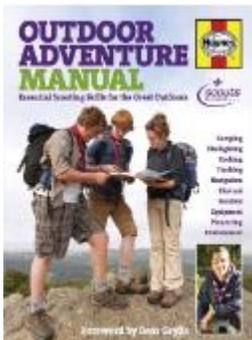
Book - Whittling and Woodcarving



Written in the thirties this is the whittler's magnum opus. In this volume Mr. Tangerman, who was one of America's foremost authorities and craftsmen, whose articles in craft magazines have taught and inspired millions, presents a full and thorough introduction to this entertaining art form. With this book, which is one of the few works that bridge the gap between whittling and serious carving, a beginner who is moderately handy can whittle or carve scores of useful objects, toys for children, gifts, or simply pass hours at applying his ingenuity to wood.

Beginning with a history of whittling and woodcarving, the book progresses gradually and easily. The first chapters supply background information on different woods, their proper selection and possible uses, selection and care of knives, and ways of using tools, including grips, types of strokes and cuts, and simple exercises. The following chapters cover rustic work, flat toys and windmills, puzzles, chains, nested spheres, fans, joints, modeling ships in bottles, and caricatures. The second half of the book covers carving proper and describes simple lines, woodcuts, low-relief pierced designs, sculpture in the round, inlay and marquetry, lettering, indoor and outdoor decorations, and styles. The final chapter describes finishing, repairs, and the care of tools. The wide range of illustrations includes both hundreds of beautiful wood objects from the great art of the world and hundreds of modern projects, many of which are contest winners.

Book – Outdoor Adventure Manual



Published by Scouts UK with a forward by Bear Grylls *The Outdoor Adventure Manual* is packed with practical Scout skill tutorials; tents and camping, fire, food and cooking, tools and gadgets, knots and lashings, navigation, first aid and survival, and more.

Skills are explained step-by-step with photos and illustrations that really bring them to life. The *Outdoor Adventure Manual* leverages the know-how of many experienced authors to provide practical instruction that is inspiring and easy to follow.

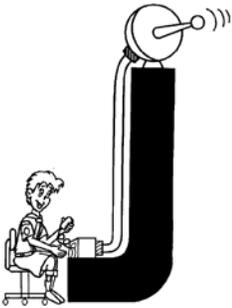
The book is not an attempt at an exhaustive reference work, it's a collection of adventurous projects, useful knowledge and activities that any Scout would enjoy. Within its pages a Scout can learn to build a shelter, make cordage out of natural materials, carve a wooden spoon, explore natural navigation, and sharpen their tracking skills.

Some of the information is specific to the British Isles and to Scouts U.K. (plant and animal identification for example) but that's not to say they aren't interesting and practical for North America. It is also a great opportunity to learn something more about the world of Scouting.

Doing the projects and trying out the skills in *The Outdoor Adventure Manual* would be a great way to spend a summer. It's a colorful, engaging, hardcover book that encourages Scouts to get outdoors and get active!

Available from Amazon, \$22 (hardcover).

Online Resources – for Learning Morse Code



Article from <http://scoutingrediscovered.com/not-categorized/best-online-resources-for-learning-morse-code/>

Ham Radio and Scouting have had a long and solid relationship. Back in 2012, I wrote an article of the Top 10 Reasons You Should Get a Ham Radio License. I also wrote a couple of articles about Jamboree On The Air – the annual Ham Radio event just for Scouts (<http://scoutingrediscovered.com/lifecraft/three-reasons-why-you-should-participate-in-jota-guest-post-on-amateurradio-com/> and <http://scoutingrediscovered.com/scoutcraft/my-experience-with-the-jamboree-on-the-air/>).

One of the ways Ham Radio and Scouting intersect is in the area of Morse Code. Morse code represents letters and numbers with a series of short pulses and long pulses (“dots and dashes” or “dits and dahs”).

Ham Radio operators use Morse to transmit and receive messages in situations where voice cannot. Similarly, Scouts have historically taught themselves Morse code for use in emergency communication. Today, it isn’t required for an Amateur Radio license, but it is still fun to learn and continues to serve in emergencies when other methods of communication fail.

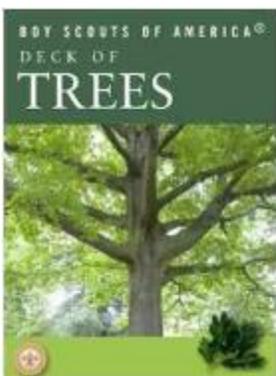
I have scoured the internet for the best free online tools to help you master the code in short order. There are great smartphone apps and downloadable programs you can use as well, but for this list I have stuck with online apps only.

Learn CW Online – This website is hands-down one of the best free online courses for learning Morse Code (CW). You can create an account and keep track of your progress. It follows one of the most universally recommended methods for learning: The Koch method. <http://lcwo.net/>

The Ham Whisperer Morse Course – This is a complete and well-done video based curriculum for learning Morse Code. It also gives exercises for practice. www.hamwhisperer.com/p/morse-code-course.html

AA9PW Morse Code Practice – This website offers a helpful tool that generates Morse code using parameters you specify. It is helpful for practicing your receiving skills. <http://aa9pw.com/morsecode/>

Book – Boy Scouts of America® Deck of Trees



This pocket-sized deck of 40 + cards contains all the information needed to identify the major coniferous and broad-leaved trees, as well as cactus and yucca, in North America.

Each card covers the region where the tree naturally occurs and details the characteristics of the foliage, flowers, fruit, and bark.

From the American Beech to the Yellow Birch, this deck of cards provides a useful reference tool for exploring the world of trees. Other DK decks include BSA® Deck of Knots, BSA® Deck of Stars, BSA® Deck of First Aid, BSA® Deck of Birds, and BSA® Deck of Fishing.

For more information on DK Publishing, please visit www.DK.com.

Best Scouting apps for iPhone and Android

Excerpt from Bryon on Scouting, <http://blog.scoutingmagazine.org/2014/04/23/best-scouting-apps-for-iphone-and-android-2014-edition/>

Empty your backpack and leave everything behind. All you need on your next Scouting outing is your smartphone. OK, so maybe that's an exaggeration. What is true, though, is that for the two-thirds of Americans who own smartphones, it's now possible to fit reference books, a GPS device, a weather radio, a compass, a map, a camera, a field guide, a recipe book and more in your pocket.

But which apps are worthy of downloading (or even — gasp! — paying for) to enhance your Scouting experience? Your fellow Scouters helped me compile the ultimate list below.

First, though, a quick note on smartphones in Scouting. They're here to stay; resistance is futile. When used properly, these technological tools can actually improve your Scout unit. The BSA's Deputy Chief Scout Executive, Gary Butler, made a compelling case for viewing them as a cure, not a curse. Read his comments here:

<http://blog.scoutingmagazine.org/2014/04/09/smartphones-in-scouting-a-curse-or-a-cure/>

Camp Scout – iOS – Free

Description: Use this official Boy Scouts of America/Boys' Life magazine app to plan your next outing with ease. It lets you find BSA properties near you and with the activities you want to do.

Yahoo Weather – Android, iOS – Free

Description: Considered by many the current best weather app. Gives accurate hourly, 5-day, and 10-day forecasts to help you properly pack for your next Scouting adventure.

KNOTS 3D – Android, iOS – \$0.99

Description: This easy-to-use app is popular among Scouters and Scouts because it is fun and allows you to digitally tie, untie and rotate more than 90 knots with just your finger.

DUTCH OVEN CALCULATOR – Android – Free

Description: It could use a design update, but there's no simpler app for calculating the number of charcoal briquettes needed to cook a given recipe in a camping Dutch oven.

GEOCACHING – Android, iOS – \$9.99

Description: The only app you need to enjoy the fun outdoor activity that spawned a Boy Scout merit badge. Helps you find one (or a dozen) of the 2 million geocache containers hidden across the globe. "My Scouts always love it when I start up the Geocaching app when at camp," Scouter Richard Walters says. "They love getting a group together and grabbing a cache wherever we go."

AUDUBON BIRDS PRO – Android, iOS – \$3.99 for Android, \$9.99 for iOS

Description: Help your Scouts or Venturers identify birds they see or hear with this excellent app that includes 821 species, 3,200 images and eight hours of bird sounds. I like that 8 percent of every sale goes directly to Audubon to support its mission to conserve and protect nature's at-risk birds and wildlife.

STAR WALK – Android, iOS – \$2.99 for iOS, \$3.17 for Android.

Description: There's something magical about the night sky, especially on a camping trip. This app helps you understand just what you're seeing. I love the augmented reality feature that labels all the stars, constellations and satellites you point your phone at.

FIRST AID BY AMERICAN RED CROSS – Android, iOS – Free

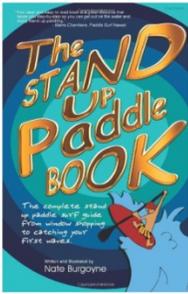
Description: The only app on this list that may someday save a life. The official American Red Cross First Aid app puts expert advice for everyday emergencies in your hand. Includes videos, interactive quizzes and simple step-by-step advice.

Gaia GPS – Android, iOS – \$19.99

Description: It's not cheap, but Gaia GPS is by far the best hiking GPS app around. It offers the functionality of a standalone backcountry GPS unit and lets you download maps for those times when you don't have a cell signal.



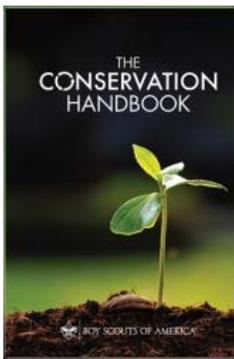
Book – The Stand Up Paddle Book



The Stand Up Paddle Book is the complete guide to stand up paddle surfing etiquette, equipment, and surfing technique! Nate Burgoyne, founder and editor of Stand Up Paddle Surfing Magazine, who is also and founder and instructor of Rainbow Watersports Adventures stand up paddle school in a Hawaii on the North Shore of Oahu , guides you through the exciting journey from window shopping for your first board to catching your first waves to taking your stand up paddle surf skills to a higher level in this, the first book ever published, on the sport. Fun illustrations, comprehensive information, real life stories, and conversational voice packed into 268 pages make The Stand Up Paddle Book the best book for learning how to stand up paddle.

Cost is about \$16, paperback

Newly Updated Conservation Handbook, Earth's Instruction Manual



While others offer scary predictions about the future of our planet, Scouts and Venturers do something to ensure those dire warnings never come true. In short, Scouts, Venturers and Scout leaders strive to leave this planet better than they found it. It's been that way since the days of Ernest Thompson Seton, the first Chief Scout of the BSA and a nationally known conservationist.

The newest and best tool in your arsenal of environmental stewardship is the second edition of the Conservation Handbook. The \$3.99 book will be back in stock in November at www.ScoutStuff.org.

Inside the spiral-bound, 144-page book, you'll find both the whys and hows of conservation.

The first of the book's two major parts is devoted to "Understanding the Mission" and includes useful strategies for responsible outdoor behavior:

- Leave No Trace
- Tread Lightly!
- Ways to reduce energy use
- Ways to save water
- Shopping sustainably

Once you've read Part 1, you're going to want to do something. To put words into action. To make a positive impact on this planet. That's what Part 2 is for. You'll find:

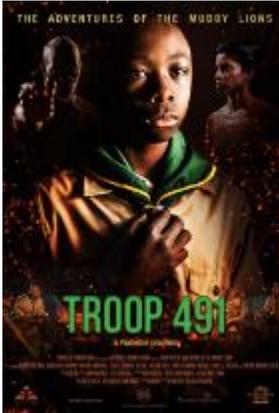
- Dozens of sample projects and project ideas
- Instructions for proper tree planting
- Guidelines for wildlife habitat improvement, like building birdhouses
- A primer on hand tools for conservation projects
- Trail maintenance tips
- Safety reminders

A conservation project planning checklist

Miscellaneous

Movies and Shows

Film Showcases the Power of Scouting But Doesn't Sugarcoat It



Meaning no disrespect to *Follow Me, Boys!*, an American classic. But that 1966 film doesn't speak to most of today's 30-something parents in need of a character-building organization for their son or daughter.

It especially doesn't resonate with those parents in America's inner cities who desperately want a way to steer their children away from violence and crime.

That's why anyone considering Scouting needs to see *Troop 491: The Adventures of the Muddy Lions*. It's available on DVD this month.

The film from Praphetic Productions is a work of fiction, but the premise is all too real:

A middle-schooler named Tristan lives in the inner city. His mom, wanting to keep him off the streets, signs him up for Scouting. Soon after, Tristan witnesses a murder, and the local thug demands his silence. He's left with the choice between Scouting's values and the code of the streets. He learns, with the help of his Scout friends, that doing the right thing isn't easy.

Watch the trailer, and you'll want to see this powerful film that encapsulates the power of Scouting but does so in a way that's gritty and avoids sentimentalism. Learn more and pre-order the DVD at the film's official website: www.troop491-movie.com/

The Richmond (Va.) Times-Dispatch, in its writeup about the movie, reveals that the film's writer and director grew up in Scouting in Richmond. He "attributes much of his core values to the time he spent with his troop: leadership, achieving goals and helping others," according to the story.

The Boy Scouts "is a counter to gang culture," Patrick Ricks told the newspaper. "The acute need for it is still there."

We should warn you that there is some strong language in the film — not unlike what actual Scout-age children would hear on the streets. We encourage you to watch it yourself before screening it for older Scouts.

How the BSA is using *Troop 491*

The Boy Scouts of America is harnessing the power of *Troop 491* to recruit chartered organizations into Scouting.

As this Scout Wire post explains (<http://scout-wire.org/2014/06/05/the-adventures-of-the-muddy-lions-a-unique-approach-to-developing-new-units/>), the BSA is developing campaign materials for councils to use *Troop 491* to help "start conversations with churches about organizing a Cub Scout pack or Boy Scout troop as part of their ministry to youth."

Expect to see that campaign early next year.

In the meantime, watch the trailer and order the DVD here: www.troop491-movie.com/#!/muddylions-store/csiu

How Do You Decide Which Movies Are Appropriate For Your Scouts, Venturers?



Parents decide which movies are OK for their children and which contain too much violence, bad language or sexual content. But what happens when that guardianship temporarily transfers to you, the Scout leader? How do you decide whether it's OK to watch that PG movie on a Cub Scout overnight or a PG-13 movie with your Venturers?

That becomes even more complicated when you realize that 12 parents may have a dozen different definitions of inappropriate movie content.

Side note: Watching movies isn't a common Scouting activity, of course. We Scouts and Scouters prefer to have most of our fun outside. But there are times during camporees, summer camps, training courses or unit trips when they're perfectly fine.

For movie going Scouters, trouble starts when you try to interpret those MPAA ratings. For a time, the Motion Picture Association of America only provided the rating: G, PG, PG-13, R, NC-17. And those ratings included some head-scratchers: Did you know *Jaws* was rated PG?

These days, we get a rating along with a few descriptions of why the movie received that rating. Helpful stuff.

For example, you might be OK taking Scouts to a movie that's PG-13 for "Intense Sci-Fi Action" but leery of one that's PG-13 for "Crude Humor."

Resources to help you:

Check out **Kids-In-Mind** (www.kids-in-mind.com/) and **Common Sense Media** (www.CommonSenseMedia.org/movie-reviews) for some easy-to-interpret guidance on a movie's appropriateness. They give the facts and let you decide.

Kids-In-Mind rates movies from 1 to 10 in three categories: sex/nudity, violence/gore and profanity. Ratings range from 1 for almost none to 10 for an obscene amount. They get really specific, even bothering to count the number of obscenities used.

Common Sense Media gives a recommended minimum age for a movie — very helpful for a Scout leader. It also uses categories but includes both positive and negative ones: Positive messages, Positive role models, Violence, Sex, Language, Consumerism and Drinking, drugs, & smoking.

'Are You Tougher than a Boy Scout?' now available on iTunes



Perhaps your pack or troop meets Monday nights. Or maybe your family doesn't have the National Geographic Channel. Whatever your excuse for missing *Are You Tougher than a Boy Scout?* — the six-episode reality series that matched Eagle Scouts against grown-ups who didn't reach Eagle as boys — now's your chance to see it all from the start.

Yes, *Are You Tougher?* is now available for purchase and download on iTunes, meaning you can watch on your computer, Apple TV, iPhone, iPad, or iPod. You can buy individual episodes in high definition for \$2.99 each or in standard definition for \$1.99 apiece. Or get the entire series for \$13.99 in HD or \$9.99 in SD.

Site: <https://itunes.apple.com/us/tv-season/are-you-tougher-than-boy-scout/id634215642>

Reading Assistance

Bookshare, BSA Opens a New Chapter



For some boys, reading doesn't come easy. And that makes the Boy Scouts of America a challenging place. *The Boy Scout Handbook*. Merit Badge pamphlets. BSA training manuals. Daunting prospects for boys with print disabilities.

Fortunately, the BSA has some great resources for those Scouts, starting with Bookshare. This summer, the BSA signed a memorandum of understanding that cements a partnership aimed at improving the Scouting experience for boys and girls with print disabilities.

Bookshare's cool online library (www.BookShare.org) allows Scouts in your pack, troop, team, or crew to "listen to books, see words and hear them read as they are highlighted on a screen, read in Braille, and much more."

The best part? It's free for U.S. students with a qualified print disability (visual impairment, a physical disability, or a learning or reading disability). For non-students or students who don't qualify, there's a \$25 setup fee and \$50 per year charge. But if you use the promo code SCOUTS, Bookshare will waive the \$25 setup fee.

Once logged in, users can view or listen to Scouting materials on desktops, laptops, iPads, iPhones, MP3 players, and assistive technology devices. Check out this PDF (www.Scouting.org/filestore/pdf/bks-scout.pdf) for complete details about the program.

Nearly 40 publications — all current — are available on the site right now, and more will be added over the next six to nine months. The goal is to keep adding publications until the complete Merit Badge Series and most commonly used manuals become available.

The site features non-Scout materials, too, including children's books and literature, newspapers, magazines, and textbooks for grade school and college.

Boys Life Magazine and Google



2011 marks the 100th Anniversary of Boys Life Magazine and Google Books has scanned and indexed every issue of the magazine from 1911 to 2008. Scouting Magazine is also part of the collection.

The exciting part is not just browsing the collection but in being able to do what Google does best and to *search* all the back magazines. If you put in Boys Life in the search field and follow with additional information you can find issues addressing specific subjects.

Educational Resources

SAT/ACT Software Available to Scouts



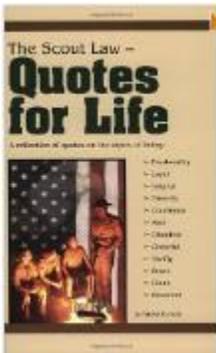
Boy Scout families — both current and former — can score up to \$250 worth of SAT or ACT test-prep computer programs for less than \$20. That means the study materials, shipping, student support, and streaming content can be yours for less than half what it costs to take the actual tests themselves.

The project waives 100% of the retail price for all standard programs and 75-95% of the retail price for all other products and services. There is a Student Fee of either \$17.55 or \$19.99 depending if it's a DVC or Cloud/Mobile program. This gets you either the SAT or ACT test-program, which includes 11 hours of video instruction, 3,000 files of supplemental test prep material, thousands of interactive diagnostic tools, sample questions, and practice tests.

Mac or PC? Doesn't matter, because the software — available either as a DVD or streamed online — works on either platform. Request the almost-free programs online at www.eknowledge.com/BSA

Inspirational

Book – Scout Law: Quotes for Life



This book, produced to inspire everyone but especially those involved in scouting, focuses on the 12 values of Scout Law: trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent. Abraham Lincoln, Mark Twain, Booker T. Washington, Henry David Thoreau, Aristotle, Emily Dickinson, and Theodore Roosevelt are some of the many timeless voices who offer hope and wisdom to readers of all ages. Here's a sample: "If you tell the truth, you don't have to remember anything." "Success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which one has overcome while trying to succeed." "We are what we repeatedly do."

Available from Amazon for about \$12.

Online Resource – Scoutmaster CG



Many of you may have noticed that a lot of the inspirational articles that appear on our newsletter's front page, and quite a few of our resource reviews, come from "Scoutmaster CG" (<http://scoutmastercg.com>). This is an excellent, unofficial Scouting blog done by Clarke Green, who has been a Scoutmaster since 1984. Besides his blog, his site includes podcasts, program ideas, Scout leader skills, an outdoor gear guide, book reviews, and much more.

Book – The Men of Schiff



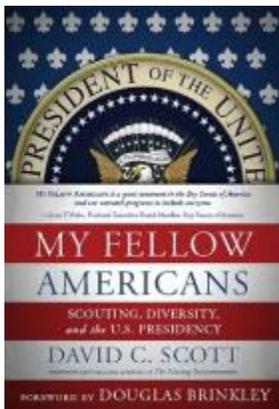
Win Davis has been a member of the Boy Scouts of America for more than sixty years as a Cub Scout, Boy Scout, Scoutmaster, Sea Scout Skipper, Commissioner, Commodore and other positions too numerous to mention. As a professional Scouter Win attended the National Executive Institute at Schiff Scout Reservation in 1970. He was fortunate enough to meet and talk with many notable Scouters and was the personal friend of William L. “Green Bar Bill” Hillcourt. In his travels Win has met Scouters from all around the world.

The Mortimer L. Schiff Scout Reservation was located near Mendham, New Jersey. From 1932-1979 it served as the BSA’s National Training Center and hosted the first Wood Badge courses held in the United States. Schiff was also the home of Scoutmaster Bill Hillcourt’s troop. Hillcourt tested the methods and ideas he wrote about in *The Patrol Leader’s Handbook*, *The Scout Handbook*, *The Scout Field Book* and many other publications he authored.

In *The Men of Schiff* Davis shares the stories and lives of a number of Scouters he was fortunate enough to have known, and weaves together a history of the Boy Scouts of America from the unique perspective of the men and women who “built a movement out of nothing but a book written by an English general, the interest of boys and the willingness of men... to take on the job of teaching boys to love the outdoors and live comfortably there.”

Available from Amazon, \$18 (paperback). Only one customer review to date.

Book – My Fellow Americans – Scouting and the Presidency



In his new book, *My Fellow Americans: Scouting, Diversity, and the U.S. Presidency*, historian David Scott chronicles something we all know something of, but do not know enough about; the special relationship between Scouting and the presidency.

Though the image of the presidency is all too often skewed by charged political divisiveness fomented by a continuous steam of partisan rhetoric, Scott’s work is a refreshingly clear and positive message of potential, and unity.

Scott parallels each chief executive’s contribution to building the Scouting movement with evolving social policies aimed at racial and religious equality, appeals to selfless service, and fostering world peace through mutual understanding. The resulting narrative reveals how each president laid aside their partisan interests and challenged Scouts to exemplify good citizenship in serving others selflessly.

If pressed most of us could name the first president who had been a Scout (Kennedy) and which was an Eagle Scout (Ford), that every president since Teddy Roosevelt has been an honorary president of the B.S.A., and recall that there’s a ceremonial annual report to the nation from B.S.A. youth representatives.

Scott’s scholarship reveals a much, much richer history.

My Fellow Americans profiles each president’s relationship with Scouting chronologically. A rich collection of speeches and correspondence describes how each chief executive valued and encouraged the ideals of Scouting in detail. Scott’s work reveals the common thread woven through 19 presidencies, encouragement to rise above the minor things that divide us to our highest and best ambitions as Scouts and as citizens.

In 'Running Toward Danger,' True Tales of Scouts Saving Lives



We often hear about Scouts sprinting to the mailbox for the latest issue of *Boys' Life* and immediately flipping to *Scouts in Action*, which features true stories of Scouts earning the BSA's heroism awards.

The appeal is understandable. Scouts who receive these awards have saved someone's life, sometimes risking their own in the process. They have saved people from burning buildings, rescued rafters from drowning in Class IV rapids and — in one shockingly true story — fought off a shark that was attacking a friend.

This is the stuff of blockbuster movies. Or, in the case of *Running Toward Danger*, a blockbuster new book.

Running Toward Danger: Real Life Scouting Action Stories of Heroism, Valor and Guts comes to us from Michael S. Malone, whose book *Four Percent* is a favorite read of Eagle Scouts and those who support them.

The new book features 170 of the most exciting rescues in the history of the BSA's heroism awards. These lifesaving awards are especially remarkable when you consider their impact through the years.

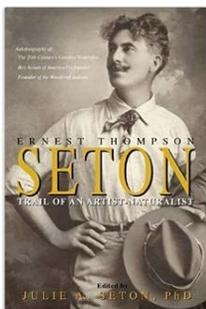
Scouting volunteer David Scott, publisher of *Running Toward Danger*, did the math and came up with the staggering number of how many people are alive today because of Scouting heroism.

"An estimated 3 to 5 million people — the equivalent of a city the size of Houston and Chicago — are alive today in the U.S. because they, or one of their parents and grandparents, had their life saved by a Boy Scout," Scott says. "No volunteer lifesaving program ... has had such an impact on a country."

And yet, Scott says, most people have never heard of the Honor Medal. They might have read about a Scout receiving one at a city council meeting, but they're probably not aware of the award's rarity or its history.

That will change when they pick up *Running Toward Danger*, the beautifully designed, full-color book available now at Amazon (\$20 hardcover, \$10 Kindle).

Book – Trail of an Artist-Naturalist (NEW EDITION)



Originally published in 1940, this NEW EDITION adds new photographs and foreword by Seton's granddaughters. Ernest Thompson Seton influenced nature lovers, artists, campers; and Scouts with his philosophy. He was inspired by his love for nature and Native American cultures. Here, Seton describes his moments of discovery, knowledge gathering, and successes as an international leader as a naturalist, artist, writer and educator. He wrote more than 40 books to include *Wild Animals I Have Known*, *Gospel of the Red Man*, *Woodcraft* and *Indian Lore*. His drawings are still found in Merriam and Century dictionaries.

Paperback, around \$19.

Flags

Things You Should Know: How to Fly a Flag at Half-staff



Part of doing your duty to country is knowing how to respect and honor the American flag.

And sometimes honoring the American flag means flying it at half-staff.

As leaders of Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, Sea Scouts and Venturers, it's important for us to know the proper way to fly the American flag during times of mourning, such as Patriot Day, on which we remember the tragic events of Sept. 11, 2001.

Step 1: Know when to fly the flag at half-staff

Halfstaff.org is a go-to site for learning whether a flag should be flown at half-staff, why it's being flown at half-staff and for how long it should be kept at that reverential height.

The call to lower the flag will come from the president or a state governor.

Also, there are several days where it's always flown at half-staff out of respect for those we have lost:

- Peace Officers Memorial Day, May 15 (sunrise to sunset)
- Memorial Day, last Monday in May (sunrise to noon)
- Patriot Day, Sept. 11 (sunrise to sunset)
- National Firefighters Memorial Day (sunrise to sunset, on the Sunday that starts Fire Prevention Week)
- Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day, Dec. 7 (sunrise to sunset)

Step 2: Hoist the flag briskly to the top of the pole

The flag ceremony will begin as usual.

When it's time to hoist the flag, it should be hoisted briskly to the peak for an instant.

Step 3: Lower the flag slowly to the half-staff position

Next, lower the flag slowly — and ceremoniously — to the half-staff position.

The half-staff position is half the distance from the top to the bottom of the staff.

Step 4: At the end of the day, raise it before lowering it

When it is time to lower the flag for the day at sunset, it should again be raised briskly to the top for a moment before being lowered slowly.

Getting a Flag Flown Over the U.S. Capitol



For the Eagle Scout in your family or retiring Scoutmaster/Cubmaster, a great gift is a US Flag that has flown over the Capitol Building in Washington DC. The flag is certified by the Architect of the Capitol, and can be flown on a specific date. To top it off, the flags are not expensive. Here's how to get a special American flag for that special someone.

Instructions

1. Contact Your Senator or Representative in Congress - The request to have an American flag flown over the US Capitol building should be made through your Congressional representative. At the website, look for the link for "Flag Request" or something similar.
 - Senator Mark Warner - www.warner.senate.gov/public/ (look under Services)
 - Senator Timothy Kane - www.kaine.senate.gov/ (look under Constituent Services)
 - Congresswoman Barbara Comstock (10th District - Virginia) - <https://comstock.house.gov/> (look under Services)
2. Fill out the form - The form will offer several types of flags, in different sizes and fabrics (usually, either cotton or nylon). Flags are typically 3 x 5 feet, or 5 x 8 feet, though larger sizes are sometimes available. Prices generally run in the \$10-25 range, depending on the specific items ordered.

The form will also ask for details such as the name of the person being honored by the flag, and the date you wish to have the flag flown (for instance, it can be flown on a person's birthday, or a special anniversary). You can also indicate the type of special occasion being honored. The information will be included on a Certificate that accompanies the flag.
3. Follow Submission Instructions - Each Congressional website has its own set of particular instructions for submitting the request, and payment. Some may allow web submissions, while others will ask that you print out the form and mail it in, with appropriate payment.

For flags flown over the Pentagon go to: www.pfpa.mil/services/flagpnt.html

For flags flown over the Virginia Capitol go to: <https://store.dgs.virginia.gov/>

Retiring a Flag Without Burning It



Scouts and Scouters have a number of options for retiring worn-out American flags. Burning is the preferred method in the U.S. Flag Code (Section 176), but it's potentially hazardous to the environment. Unlike the cotton and wool flags made in the early 20th century, today's flags are made out of petroleum-based materials like nylon. Burning nylon is different from burning cotton or wool and can create hazardous gas.

One alternative is to recycle the flag. At the retirement ceremony, you can cut up your flag using an approved technique that doesn't cut through the blue star field. When a flag has been cut up, it is no longer officially a flag.

Here is one method:

1. Stretch out the corners of the flag.
2. Cut the flag in half, vertically — do not cut into the blue star field.
3. Place the two halves together and cut in half, horizontally.
4. You will have four pieces of flag, one being the blue star field and the other three red and white stripes.
5. Put the flag in a container and dispose of it properly.

Here's another similar approach: <http://usscouts.org/ceremony/flagret1.asp>

PRO: Doesn't introduce hazardous gases into the environment. Is safe enough for anyone who can use scissors, even Cub Scouts, to participate.

CON: Some might consider it less ceremonial. You still have to throw the flag away (though after it's cut up it's no longer a flag).

BSA recently updated its guidelines to read: "We simply need to ask ourselves if the manner in which we are retiring (destroying) the flag is dignified. If the answer is yes, then that method is perfectly acceptable."

Book – Book on U.S. Flag History and Protocol



So Proudly We Hail, The History of the United States Flag by Rear Admiral William Furlong and Commodore Byron McCandless. Published by the Smithsonian Institution Press, 1981. The cover flap of this book reads:

"A richly illustrated history of the American flag, *So Proudly We Hail* weaves the fascinating and definitive story of the country's central symbol from colonization to the present.

Written by Rear Admiral William Rea Furlong, designer of the new star arrangement when the 49th and 50th stars were added to the flag and, Commodore McCandless, a consultant to three presidents on flag protocol, this book is eminently readable as well as authoritative.

So Proudly We Hail is the first broadly researched history of the United States flag that includes both historical and technological information, and becomes the most up-to-date account of the history of our nation's flag. It will stand as *the* definitive reference book on this subject for many years to come."

The book is available from Amazon at:

www.amazon.com/So-Proudly-We-Hail-History/dp/0874744490

Unit Flag Decorations



There are three flag decoration items that can be added to a flag, if desired. These items can be purchased from the BSA at www.ScoutStuff.org or your local scout shop.

Flag fringes and tassels - A gold cord and tassel can be tied to the flag pole for a distinctive touch. A gold fringe can be sewn around the flag border. Neither of these items has significant meaning and are meant to make the flag display a bit more pronounced.

Veteran Unit emblem - This emblem represents the number of years the unit has been in existence and is a completely optional decoration to add or leave off. The emblem comes as a square of cloth, but can be sewn as a round. Emblem is affixed to unit flag midway between the top and bottom of the flag and midway between the staff edge and center flag emblem.

Gold Stars - Gold stars may be affixed to the unit flag indicating past members of the unit who died in the service of their country. The stars should be placed along the staff edge of the flag, parallel to the staff, with the bottom star 6 inches from the staff edge and 6 inches from the bottom edge; subsequent stars to be placed proportionately on that line, up to the place assigned to the veteran insignia.

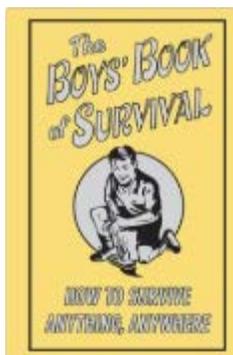
Everything Else

Hiking Sticks Gifts



If you know of someone who is ready to become an Eagle Scout, or is already an Eagle Scout, then the site www.MsSticks.com has the perfect gift for you. Licensed by the BSA they can create Eagle Sticks which will display each and every merit badge the Scout has earned, along with other personal information, such as name, troop number, council, and date. For that retiring Scoutmaster they can create a Life History stick customized to their height and displaying the important things that have happened to them in their lives. They can even place a small compass on the top of the stick.

Book - The Boys' Book of Survival (How To Survive Anything, Anywhere)



Living up to the Boy Scout motto "Be prepared," this title covers everything from pimples to zombie invasions. This nod to yesteryear has plenty of practical pointers and humorous advice, with passages on how to put someone in the recovery position or carry someone with a foot or ankle injury, but most of the chapters have a basis in orienteering (How to Make a Compass Using the Sun), just-in-case scenarios (How to Escape from Quicksand), and the fantastical (zombies, anyone?). Campbell presents his instructions in clearly written and easy-to-read lists. Of course all this valuable information comes after a giant disclaimer, emphasizing common sense.

Available from Amazon (\$7 hardcover) this book has a rating of 4.5 stars with 117 customer reviews.

Tips for Deducting Scouting-Related Expenses on Your Income Tax Return



When Baden-Powell said “Be Prepared,” We’re pretty sure he wasn’t talking about income tax returns. But still, there’s no better advice than that two-word phrase during tax time.

Scouters who heeded the Scout Motto last year remembered to track and document their Boy Scouts of America-related expenses. And now, they know that they can include those expenses if they plan to itemize their deductions.

But what if you didn’t know that BSA expenses were deductible? Or what if your “filing system” is really your glove compartment that’s stuffed with gas receipts and crumpled-up napkins? And what qualifies as an eligible expense, anyway?

General facts you need to know

- On IRS Form 1040, “2015 Instructions for Schedule A”, the Boy Scouts of America is listed by name on page A-9 as a “qualified charitable organization,” so BSA expenses are eligible.
- Three types of contributions can be deducted:
 - Cash/check donations
 - Property donations
 - “Out-of-pocket expenses you paid to do volunteer work”
- Some types of relevant contributions cannot be deducted:
 - Travel expenses, like meals or lodging
 - The value of your time
 - Scouting dues or membership fees
- IRS Publication 526 has lots more info (thanks, William)

Easy enough, right? Scouters will mainly be concerned with that third type of eligible deductions, “out-of-pocket expenses you paid to do volunteer work.”

Some items that you purchase to benefit your unit can be deducted, provided your unit didn’t reimburse you for them. You’ll want to check with your tax professional to be sure, but some Scouters have deducted uniforms, merit badge pamphlets, den meeting activity kits, Wood Badge course fees and much more — again, as long as their pack or troop didn’t reimburse them.

However, there’s one expense that you can deduct: the cost of driving to and from BSA events.

How to include driving expenses

- First, you’re eligible to deduct the cost of driving to and from the volunteer work, which would include most BSA activities. You have two options here:
 - You can take the actual cost of gas and oil, OR
 - You can take 14 cents a mile (note: the 2015 rate for volunteer work mileage remains at 14 cents a mile)
- Add parking and tolls to the amount you claim under either method above.
- As a reminder, you cannot deduct any expenses, mileage included, that were repaid to you by your unit, district, council or anyone else.

Important caveats

Next, there’s the tricky part of “gifts from which you receive benefit.” Let’s say, for example, that you attend your council’s annual dinner. Can you deduct that expense? Sort of.

Here’s what the IRS says: “If you made a gift and received a benefit in return, such as food, entertainment, or merchandise, you can generally only deduct the amount that is more than the value of the benefit.”

So if tickets for the council dinner were \$75 and the value of the dinner was \$35, you can only deduct \$40. Or if you paid \$110 for a \$100 gift card at a silent auction, you can only deduct \$10.

Also, you’ll want to consult a tax professional or the IRS site for individual gifts of \$250 or more. There are special rules that apply to those larger gifts.

Download these Cub Scout Smartphone Backgrounds



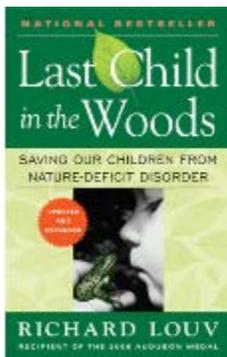
Cub Scout Spirit is alive and well, but until now that's been limited to T-shirts, bumper stickers and Facebook profile photos. Not anymore.

Six new Cub Scout smartphone backgrounds let you display your Cub Scout pride on your iPhone, Android phone or Windows phone.

Visit <http://cubscouts.org/smart-phone-backgrounds/> to download your favorite background and set it as your smartphone's lock screen, background or wallpaper. They'll work on any smartphone, including iOS, Android, Windows Phone and Blackberry devices.

The free smartphone backgrounds tell others that Cub Scouting is always with you — just like your smartphone itself!

Book - Last Child in the Woods



From an article by Adam R. Cox, Mar 12, 2012: <https://scouteradam.wordpress.com/2012/03/12/the-nature-deficit-disorder/>

This past week while traveling for work, I picked up a great book. Now, I generally get books in the Airport and are related to CIA/Spy Novel stuff about blowing stuff up. I read a lot of history as well. But this was different. First off, I picked it up in the Scout Shop in Spokane, Wa. The Inland Northwest Council.

It is called “Last Child in the Woods” by Richard Louv.

While the book itself is really long and filled with a lot of facts of this and that, tells stories about nature and the author's upbringing. Something hit me about this book and the children of today. Even the young 20somethings as well. They do not know what it was like to grow up and be with nature. This is something that I am currently experiencing with my children and even with those that I train at work. They do not get or understand nature and some of the cultural references that I know.

While reading this book I am constantly going back to my childhood in Billings, Mt and all the stuff I did and got away with. I played outside, built forts, huge holes in the ground, built snow forts, hiked, fished, rode bikes, walked up/down streams and so much more... I went to Camp Lincoln and learned how to sail and canoe. Even spent 4 days canoeing down the Mississippi River. It's where I first realized that I liked being the camp cook. Note that I also figured out that Blackberry Strudel mix and Beef Stew really does not mix well when cooking dinner. Need separate bowls/pots.

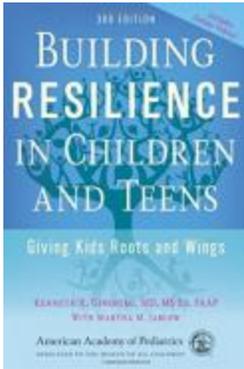
Fast forward to now. Now as the book spells out, parents are hyper sensitive to “NATURE” and getting hurt and the Lawyer & Insurance crowd. If your kid gets hurt, parents sue whomever into the ground. So, kids do not get out and play. They play Wii/XBOX.

One of my main reasons of being in Cub Scouts is to get the Scouts OUTSIDE.

Suffice to say, I am going to be working on making changes within my family (already have) but also working to do more within Scouts.

I am going to use this Resource guide from the book (<http://richardlouv.com/books/last-child/resource-guide/>) and see what we can do. I also want to incorporate hiking within the Pack.

Book - Building Resilience in Children and Teens



Extract of review by Scoutmaster Clarke Green, <http://scoutmastercg.com/building-resilience-seven-cs-and-scouting/>

An author was being interviewed on the radio in the background as I was working away at my desk. He was discussing building resilience in young people. As I listened I thought “Hey! Who is this guy? This sounds a lot like Scouting!”

It turned out Dr. Kenneth Ginsburg was being interviewed and after listening I got a copy of his book *Building Resilience in Children and Teens*. As I read I recognized Scouting explained with greater definition, clarity, and order; a “high resolution” version of familiar landmarks.

As the title indicates Ginsburg begins by introducing resilience;

If we want our children to experience the world as fully as possible—unfortunately with all its pain, and thankfully with all its joy—our goal will have to be resilience. Resilience is the capacity to rise above difficult circumstances, the trait that allows us to exist in this less-than-perfect world while moving forward with optimism and confidence.

“Resilient” is the best one-word answer to the question “what do we want our children to be?”

We know that Scouting is aimed at building character. How do we define character? I think the character we are aimed at and the qualities of resilience are one and the same. Ginsburg expands on this short-hand term by defining the “Seven Crucial Cs of Resilience”;

Competence: *When we notice what young people are doing right and give them opportunities to develop important skills, they feel competent. We undermine competence when we don't allow young people to recover themselves after a fall.*

Confidence: *Young people need confidence to be able to navigate the world, think outside the box, and recover from challenges.*

Connection: *Connections with other people, schools, and communities offer young people the security that allows them to stand on their own and develop creative solutions.*

Character: *Young people need a clear sense of right and wrong and a commitment to integrity.*

Contribution: *Young people who contribute to the well-being of others will receive gratitude rather than condemnation. They will learn that contributing feels good and may therefore more easily turn to others, and do so without shame.*

Coping: *Young people who possess a variety of healthy coping strategies will be less likely to turn to dangerous quick fixes when stressed.*

Control: *Young people who understand privileges and respect are earned through demonstrated responsibility will learn to make wise choices and feel a sense of control.*

See what I mean? The 7 Cs are a good definition of the Scout law and the Scout oath. Dr. Ginsburg has crafted a practical, compelling tool for building character; the main aim of Scouting (and parenthood). If you strive to be a better Scouter and/or better parent I recommend studying *Building Resilience in Children and Teens*.