

GENERAL INFORMATION
FOR PARENTS OF
NEW SCOUTS
OF
TROOP 180

First, a word to parents about the Boy Scout Program in general. We, the adult leaders in Troop 180, like to use the analogy of a three-legged milking stool to describe the Scouting Program in Forest. The boy, the parent, and the adult leader make up the three legs. Without even one of the legs, the stool will fall. In short, Scouting is for boys; but without the cooperation and encouragement of the parents, and the leaders, the boy will not succeed.

GETTING STARTED:

Complete Boy Scout Application Form and sign where indicated. Return the form in person to an adult leader at the next Troop meeting. This will give you an opportunity to ask any questions about the Troop operation.

Annual dues are collected in December. They are prorated if you join during the year. Dues are currently \$ 48.00 per year, which includes liability insurance. Prorated dues are \$ 4.00 for each month remaining in the year. Part of the dues are forwarded to the BSA National Office as a registration fee; the balance is used for the Troop's programs and expenses including the purchase of the awards and badges your son will earn. Return the check with the Application Form; checks should be made payable to "Boy Scout Troop 180".

PARENTS AS A RESOURCE:

We are all individuals with different talents and interests. Perhaps some of your talents can be put to use in teaching skills to the Scouts. There are numerous activities beside camping, first aid, knot tying, etc. that our Scouts could enjoy. There are well over 100 Merit Badges that can be earned. The Merit Badges that are required for the Eagle Scout rank and most of the other Merit Badges are offered annually by the Troop, at Summer Camp, or at Merit Badge College. There are numerous other ones that we might offer if we could find a qualified instructor. Won't you share your skills with us? Please let the Scoutmaster know what areas you are interested in and he can determine how your knowledge might fit into our program.

The Troop as it grows will continue to need drivers to get the scouts to events or to haul equipment or pull our trailer. If you can help in this way, please let one of the adult leaders know and we will direct you to the individual that is coordinating the event or to the Troop Committee's Logistics Coordinator.

WHAT TO BUY:

Initially, your son will need a Boy Scout Handbook and at least the current season's full uniform (more on this later). His should bring his book and wear his uniform to ALL Scouting events and meetings unless instructed to do otherwise. If he is a Webelos Scout bridging over from Pack 180 or Pack 360, it has been our tradition for the Troop to supply his book and present it to him at the Bridging Ceremony.

More important, is what NOT to buy. Not only are you NOT REQUIRED to buy the following items, but in our opinion, you SHOULD NOT buy these items (at this time) --- even if your son tells you he needs them AND even if he says everyone else has them AND even if your brother-in-law owns a sporting goods store:

ITEMS NOT TO BUY

Tent **
Expensive Sleeping Bag **
New or Better Backpack **
Official Cook Kit
\$ 200 Hiking Boots
Compass **
Backpacker's Stove
Propane Lantern
Sheath (survival) Knife
Almost any labor-saving, make-life-easier,
light- weight, fits-into-pack, must-have-to-
survive item found at Wal-Mart

WHY NOT

Troop has Plenty
The one he or Dad already has is probably OK
Ditto
It doesn't last long and you have better at home
See if he's serious about hiking a lot first
Troop has some to use
Learn to cook on wood first
Too bulky; and we have them
Against Boy Scout Policy

WHY ?

** These items are of such personal choice that a Scout will often buy several new and different (better) ones before he's finished. Give him an opportunity to see what several others have before choosing.

UNIFORMS:

As mentioned above, we wear our full uniforms.

THE TROOP COMMITTEE (adults) AND THE PATROL LEADERS COUNCIL (boys) HAVE DECIDED THAT EACH SCOUT MUST MEET CERTAIN UNIFORM REQUIREMENTS AS A SHOWING OF SCOUT SPIRIT IN FULFILLMENT OF RANK REQUIREMENTS FOR ADVANCEMENT.

The Boy Scout uniform is a great equalizer. If there is not an opportunity to wear designer shirts or jeans, there is no chance a boy will feel left out by not having them. The uniform is easily identifiable in the community; it should be worn correctly.. The shirt is always tucked into the pants.

The Troop expects that all Scouts will be in FULL uniform while attending the meeting. If you have a child in baseball, band, cheerleading, or football; or one who works at McDonald's, Target, or Kroger; you've encountered this policy before. If it is necessary that a Scout come directly from some other event; a place will be provided so that he may change into his uniform in privacy.

The following is the uniform to be purchased and worn:

BSA Shirt (short sleeve only) Tan with:

Troop Numbers (the Troop stocks the "180" patch)

American Flag (comes already sewn onto the shirt)

Blue Ridge Mountains Council Strip

Patrol Patch (know patrol assigned - the Troop may have some for sale)

T 180 red T-shirt (the Troop may have some in stock, but orders them annually in the Spring) ++

BSA convertible Pants with zip-off legs

BSA Hat (baseball cap style) IF SCOUT CHOOSES TO WEAR A HAT

++ Troop 180 Tee Shirt when worn with BSA Pants is know as our Class B uniform..

Uniforms and the Boy Scout Handbook can be purchased at the Scout Shop at the Blue Ridge Mountains Council office near Valley View Mall in Roanoke. The Scout Shop, staffed by BSA professionals is open daily from 9AM until 6PM weekdays and Saturdays 10AM to 4PM. You can also phone in orders (540-265-4443) to the Scout Shop and have them charged to your credit card, if you know the sizes.

CAMPOUTS AND OTHER ACTIVITIES:

Anytime the Troop has an overnight campout or other activity requiring us to be out of the area, your son will be given detailed instructions as to when to meet, what to bring, how much it will cost, and any special preparations needed. This is given verbally at the Tuesday meeting preceding the event and is normally shown on the Troop website (see below). It is at this meeting before the campout or event that the money for food or other expenses will be collected. If a Scout has not paid the money due by the end of this meeting, he will not be able to attend the campout (see more information below in the Cooking Section). The Scouts are instructed to take notes using their pad and pen which they are asked to carry always. If your son is absent from that meeting, or has any questions, he should call his PATROL LEADER to obtain the necessary details; the Patrol Leader's number is on the website.

On these campouts, your Scout will need certain equipment in order to make life more comfortable. The necessary items are detailed in the Boy Scout Handbook, but for convenience we will hand out a list of necessary items that we refer to as the "Standard Stuff List." It is assumed he will bring all of the items on the Standard Stuff List, but items may be added to or deleted from this list depending on the circumstances. Parents: always use the Standard Stuff List and the Scout's notes as a checklist to help your son pack for campouts. This will not only give you the satisfaction of knowing that he is bringing all that is necessary to make him comfortable, but also allows you to participate somewhat in the outdoor activities of the Troop.

Cooking on campouts can be Individual (one Scout cooks for himself) or Group (two or more Scouts plan a menu, divide costs, share cooking, fire building, and cleanup responsibilities). Group cooking is usually Patrol Cooking (an entire patrol helps under the direction of the Patrol Leader), but can be Buddy Cooking (two boys help each other) or Troop Cooking (same as Patrol Cooking but on a larger scale). Whenever group cooking is planned, usually one scout is assigned to purchase the food. He will be given the food money collected at the Tuesday meeting, usually \$10-\$12 per person, and told how many to buy for. This way no expenditure of family funds will be necessary.

Mothers (or other Chief Family Cook), do your son a favor; teach him how to cook a simple balanced meal at home before he attempts it on a campout. Pick three meals (breakfast, lunch, and dinner) that he likes from the Boy Scout Handbook and cook them repeatedly at home on the stove under controlled conditions. He will then be better prepared and more confident when he has to tackle this task on an open fire. We also teach the Cooking Merit Badge annually to transfer household cooking skills outdoors to stove and open-fire cooking.

One final word on activities. Two or more adult leaders will accompany the Scouts on any activity. We have limited seating capacity, and will usually have to depend on parents to transport some of the Scouts. One of the Troop Committee members will contact parents before each event to ask for help with the driving. We hope that you will help when your turn comes (remember that three-legged stool?). We will generally return your Scout to Mountain View United Methodist Church and ask you to pick them up. The approximate time of drop-off will be announced at the preparation meeting the previous Tuesday. The drivers will allow each Scout to use his cell phone to call home with a final ETA when we are about 30 minutes away from MVUMC. If arranged in advance, we can drop the Scout off at home, if the parents can't be at the church on time. In the rare case when a parent can't be contacted after a reasonable amount of time, the boy will be taken to an adult's home (usually the Scoutmaster's) where another adult will be present until the parents can pick him up. The boy will not be allowed to go to a friend's house unless pre-arranged or a parent is contacted. In accordance with Boy Scout policy (not to mention State law and good common sense), each boy will be required to wear a seatbelt.

MEETINGS:

Troop 180 meets on Tuesday nights at Mountain View United Methodist Church, across Rte 221 from Forest Middle School. We meet year-round; exceptions are shown on our schedule. In the case of bad weather, if there is no school in Bedford County, there is no Scout meeting. Our meetings start

PROMPTLY at 7:00 PM and end approximately at 8:30. Parents should make every effort to help their son meet his responsibility of arriving on time. Either the Scout or the Scoutmaster may ask to make special arrangements to arrive early or leave late in order to help a Scout with Advancement, Scoutmaster Conferences, Special Projects, Questions, or Personal Concerns. Parents are encouraged to come into the meeting room when picking up Scouts to visit with the adult leaders, or to stay for the entire meeting. We are teaching boys to become more independent and how to communicate on their own. The Troop website will provide parents with further insight into activities and needs. The boys might not communicate the best at first, but this is how they learn to become better at expressing themselves.

TROOP WEBSITE

Our Troop website <http://vatroop180.org> has a lot of information concerning our schedule; you may find your answer to many questions there. To gain full benefit of the site, and full access to it, both the Scout and his parent should register. Registrations are screened to make sure only authorized persons have access to information about the Scouts.

The website is maintained by the Troop Webmaster (a boy leadership position) and is overseen by the Website Administrator (an adult). It contains the Troop Calendar, a safe chat room, information on the next meeting and the next event, FAQs, and links to other scouting sites and forms.

SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES:

Usually quarterly, a schedule of upcoming activities is announced; the schedule is developed by the Patrol Leaders Council (PLC). Other annual events like Summer Camp and The Oceana Air Show are placed on the calendar very far in advance so that families can plan for them. Please consult this schedule to avoid conflicts with other family, community, or school events. A word on conflicts... Scouting does not compete with other activities; your boy can do other things and Scouting too. (Troop 180 is proud to have several Eagle Scouts who have earned Varsity Sports letters, Academic letters, and scholarships in both, while attaining their Eagle Rank.) Scouting is a year-round activity; others are often seasonal. In fact, your son can earn Merit Badges by participating in such activities as Swim Team, Team Sports, and even Music Lessons. Encourage your son to come late rather than miss a meeting or campout.

ACHIEVEMENT SIGN-OFF:

Speaking of earning awards, the Boy Scouting program is somewhat different than Cub Scouting in terms of signing-off awards and advancement. Concerning RANK ADVANCEMENT, while we encourage the parents to work with the boys to help them advance, the parents are never permitted to sign-off the actual tasks in the Handbook. The Troop has numerous qualified leaders (both boys and adults) who will instruct, test, and sign-off all tasks. Please work with your son, in accordance with the methods in the handbook, and when he is ready, ask him to contact one of the troop leaders for testing and sign-off.

Concerning MERIT BADGES, several qualified individuals are available to us who have agreed to be Merit Badge Counselors for all of the required Merit Badges and most of the commonly selected optional badges. Therefore, it should never be necessary for a parent to counsel his own son on these Merit Badges. There are times when a Scout would like to earn a Merit Badge in a subject area for which the parent is uniquely qualified to instruct. This may be handled in one of two ways in order to prevent the

appearance of any favoritism or partiality. First, the Merit Badge might be taught to a class of Scouts who of course would be able to verify that each of the other Scouts performed all of the required tasks. Second, to be used only when the son is the only Scout interested in taking the Merit Badge in question, is for the parent to instruct and signoff the boy and then have the Scout present the work to a second adult selected by the Scoutmaster. This second adult would not instruct nor re-test the Scout; he would only question him to the minimum amount necessary to verify that the work was actually done. Naturally, this individual would have to have some knowledge of the subject matter so it is important that this conflict be called to the attention of the Scoutmaster before the work on the badge is started. It is important that Scouts advise the Scoutmaster before starting work on a Merit Badge so that we know that the instructor is both qualified and approved.

When a Scout has completed an activity, rank, or Merit Badge and it has been signed-off in his book, it is his responsibility to have an adult leader post it to the Troop Record Book. This is a permanent record of his achievements and is the only thing we refer to when we order the awards to be presented at the Court of Honor. It is most unfortunate when a Scout expects to receive an award but does not because it was never entered into the Troop Record Book. Please remind him to have his achievements posted. He should also advise the Troop Scribe to post his achievements to the Advancement Chart on the Troop Bulletin Board.

TROOP ORGANIZATION:

Troop 180 is sponsored by the Mountain View United Methodist Church (our Chartered Organization) which in turn receives its Scout charter from the Boy Scouts of America through the Blue Ridge Mountains Council. The church's executive board appoints a representative (Chartered Organization Representative) to develop and foster the Scouting program for the church. The Chartered Organization Representative is automatically on the Council Committee and represents the Troop (and the Cub Pack and Venture Crew) at Council meetings.

The MVUMC also appoints or endorses the appointment of the Scoutmaster, Assistant Scoutmasters, Troop Committee Chairman, and Troop Committee Members. In general, the Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmasters work closely with the boys, attend all meetings, and go on campouts with them, including Summer Camp. The Troop Committee tends to work in the background by supporting Troop activities and aiding in finances and record keeping. Please feel free to contact any adult leader concerning your son's welfare or advancement. Also, call if you have any questions or need additional information concerning an event and your Scout is unable to get this information from his Patrol Leader.

An Assistant Scoutmaster is assigned by the Scoutmaster to function as an advisor to each Patrol. He is there to offer guidance to the Patrol Leader and to help train the patrol on leadership principles. He usually operates in the background, allowing the Patrol Leader to take full responsibility for the activities of his Patrol. In addition, there are other Leadership Positions, Scribe, Troop Guide, WebMaster to name a few, that boys may be appointed or elected to. These positions have an adult mentor appointed from registered Committee members to help the Scout understand and fulfill the responsibilities of his Leadership Position.

LEADERSHIP:

Lord Robert Baden-Powell, the founder of the Scouting movement, stressed the importance of allowing the boys to manage the troop. Not only does this teach leadership, but the Troop actually runs better this way. When each boy is represented (through his patrol leader) at the Patrol Leaders Council (PLC), he feels more a part of the Troop operations and decisions. As Baden-Powell said, "The Patrol Method is not **a way** to run a troop; it is **the only way**". Frequently the new Scout will ask many

questions of the Scoutmaster and other adult leaders: "When do we eat?", "Do you want me to build the fire?", "When do the Camporee events start?", etc. He asks the adult because in his mind the adult must be "the one in charge of all these boys". The answer he will usually receive is, "Ask your Patrol Leader". This is done not to avoid the question but to teach the new Scout the chain of command; and, in reality, the Scoutmaster isn't "the one in charge of all these boys" --- the Senior Patrol Leader is. In short, the boys run Troop 180.

MISCELLANY:

There are one or two other things that you should know. We ask that each boy bring a pen and a small writing pad to every meeting and event. Both should be carried in the left pocket of his uniform shirt.

Troop 180 has very active camping and advancement programs. These will provide each Scout with sufficient opportunities to advance to First Class within about one (1) year of joining the Troop. Encourage him to participate to the fullest and advance quickly. We expect, and parents should too, that every Scout achieve his First Class rank within the first 12 to 18 months. Even though advancement is a personal thing, we do try to include a certain amount of "needed activities" when the PLC plans the Troop's calendar. If we are not planning something that your son needs, please ask him to speak to his Patrol Leader so that this can be brought up at the next PLC meeting.

Finally, as I've already said, if you as a parent have any questions or anything that you feel we (adults) need to be aware of, please call me (434-941-7854) or Danny Roberts , our Scoutmaster (434-851-3906), or the Assistant Scoutmaster assigned to your son's Patrol (see Troop website). These are cell numbers that will work when we are on the road or, in most cases, where we are camping

Yours in Scouting,

John Wm. Griessmayer
Chairman, Troop Committee

LATEST REVISION: 8/24/11

Enclosures: Registration Form
Standard Stuff List