

WELCOME TO OUR NEW SCOUTS AND THEIR PARENTS

Hello! The Scouts and leadership of Troop 652 are happy your son is considering choosing us as his Scouting home. Many exciting days of camping and other fun-packed experiences await him as he walks the Scouting trail that may one day lead him to the rank of Eagle Scout. It would be our privilege to help him along the way. Here is some general information that will address a number of the most frequently asked questions about the policies and activities of Boy Scouts of America and, in particular, Troop 652.

The following is a brief outline of our activities and how we manage ourselves.

Sponsorship:

We are sponsored by St. Peter United Church of Christ on Long Point Road near Campbell

Meetings

Monday nights 7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., in the Church Fellowship Hall. Unless noted otherwise Scouts and Leaders attend in full uniform. Meetings sometimes are moved to Tuesdays or ended early due to holidays, tests, etc. Meetings continue through the summer; check the Calendar posted at www.bsatroop652.org. Usually there are NO troop meetings on Committee Meeting nights (which usually follows a campout), final exam weeks, or winter/summer campout weeks.

Meeting attendance is very important to Scouting and the Scout's Advancement. While attendance at every meeting is not mandatory (we agree that SCHOOL COMES FIRST and accept there will be conflicts) missing more than a third of the meetings will make learning and advancement very difficult if not impossible.

Troop Organization

- Troop is boy-run, with adults as resources for the boys
- Troop is divided into patrols, each having Scouts of varying ages and led by senior boys (Patrol Leader and Assistant Patrol Leader).
- Patrols typically function as units for meetings and typically camp together, sharing camping chores like cooking and other activities.
- In addition to patrols and patrol activities there are Troop activities which involve all Scouts, and Troop leadership positions, such as Quartermaster (in charge of equipment), Scribe (maintains library), and Junior Assistant Scoutmaster.
- Scout Leaders and Parents work through the Troop Committee to manage the "overhead", such as finances, fundraisers, calendar, and setting Troop policy.
- Troop committee meets approximately once per month, usually on the Monday evening following a campout, at 7:30 p.m. (Usually - but not always - no Troop meeting that night.)

Who are the current leaders of Troop 652?

1. Scoutmaster -- Steve McCampbell 713 - 516 - 4749
2. Scoutmaster Emeritus -- James Mueller 713 - 468 - 6084
3. Assistant Scoutmasters
4. Committee Chairman
5. Jr. Assistant Scoutmasters
6. Senior Patrol Leader (SPL)
7. Assistant Senior Patrol Leaders (ASPL)
8. Patrol Leaders

Posts 3 to 8 change fairly frequently, especially the boy positions, so these names are not listed.

Cost of belonging to the Troop

- Annual dues are \$120.00 per year, billed in September, and payable by 1 December.
- New Scouts joining after 1 January pay prorated dues.
- Adult leaders' dues are \$16.00 per year, payable by 1 December.
- Dues cover basic operating expenses of the Troop, including awards and Troop equipment maintenance/replacement, charter renewal, and Scouting magazine.
- Other expenses include campout fees, equipment rental fees, and transportation fees. These vary -- see **Campouts**. Membership in the Order of the Arrow (optional) is \$12/year.
- Cost of uniform (roughly \$50.-), a one-time expense unless lost, damaged, or outgrown
- Troop activities may include one or two fundraisers per year.

Uniforms

Standard uniform is Boy Scout "Class A" (available at Scout Shops):

- short pants and/or long trousers
- Scout socks
- webbed Boy Scout belt with buckle
- short sleeve Scout shirt
- The shirt requires the American flag patch, World Scouting patch, and the Sam Houston Council patch, which are also to be purchased at the Scout Shop.
- The Boy Scout Handbook (also purchased at the Scout Shop) (spiral bound preferred)
- Troop supplies the numbers 652, patrol patch, and Quality Unit patch.
- Troop also supplies one neckerchief and slide; replacements cost \$8 and \$3.
- Headgear is optional.

The Troop has a "Class B" uniform (Troop 652 t-shirt, \$10, worn with Uniform pants), which is worn for certain activities (usually during summer).

The role of Parents in the Troop

Parent support is absolutely necessary for Scouting. While many of the activities are "boy run" the parents are key assistants and coaches. Parents are also key to the campouts, providing both transportation and backup support. Dads are invited to join their Sons as often as possible on the monthly outings.

The parents who closely support their sons and get involved in some aspects of a Scout Troop will generally have boys who get the most out of Boy Scouting and who advance further in the quest for the Eagle Scout Rank. Conversely, the boys whose parents do not closely support them in Scouting can expect that their boys will not do as well as they may be capable of doing.

Advancement

The ranks in Scouting are:

- Scout
- Tenderfoot Scout
- Second Class Scout
- First Class Scout
- Star Scout
- Life Scout
- Eagle Scout.

Advancement takes several forms:

- Completion of basic scouting skill requirements in the BOY SCOUT HANDBOOK (which leads ultimately to First Class Scout)
- Earning merit badges, which signify mastery of skills relevant to every day living, such as First Aid, Safety, Environmental Science, Citizenship, Swimming, Life Saving, etc.
- Peer and adult review and Personal Growth Agreement with the Scoutmaster where the boy sets his next scouting goal and the steps to achieve that goal

Merit badge classes and other training are taught at **Campouts** and also at meetings by parent volunteers and adult leaders. Many awards require some "homework" (usually not a lot).

Advancement is recognized at Courts of Honor, meetings where the Scout is given his earned rank and awards in front of the Troop and parents.

There is no set timetable for advancement, as this is best done by the individual Scout on his own terms. However there are some guidelines and one firm rule:

- The Troop targets to get "most of the basics" taught in roughly the first year of participation, so the boy will likely reach First Class Scout within a year or so of joining
- Striving for Eagle is difficult and requires some maturity and personal growth. Historically the Troop has suggested that boys be at least 14 or in high school before earning Eagle. However, by High School Senior year (in some cases Junior year) the distractions and demands on time grow, so it may be a good target to earn your Eagle before then.
- **THE OFFICIAL BSA RULE:** Eagle rank *must* be earned before the boy's 18th birthday.

Calendar of Events

The Troop calendar varies from year to year. A preliminary calendar is usually prepared mid-summer for August-to-August and posted on the website at that time, but as activities get firmed and schedules change it gets revised. The calendar should be checked frequently.

Routine activities:

- Troop Meetings -- Mondays from 7:30 pm to 9 pm
- Troop Campouts -- Friday evening thru Sunday afternoon -- timing varies, but most likely the 3rd weekend of the month
- Troop Committee Meetings -- usually Monday after the Campout, 7 pm to 8:30 pm (Usually no Troop Meeting on the night of the Committee Meeting)

Typical Special Activities (timing very approximate -- based on 2004-2005 calendar):

- mid-October -- Order of the Arrow PowWow (SHAC event)
- December or January -- Webelo Woods (Weekend event where Troop trains Webelos)
- 26-31 December -- Winter Camp
- mid-February -- District Camporee
- mid-April -- District Scout Fair at Reliant Center
- early May -- annual Food Drive -- at least one Scout and Parent either Saturday (hang grocery sacks on house doors) or Sunday (collect food put in the sacks) for a few hours
- May or June -- Family Campout -- whole family welcome -- Scouts and Leaders do the cooking
- June, sometimes July -- Summer Camp (week-long plus travel time)
- June-August -- "High Adventure" activity for older Scouts (varies, does not happen every year)

Campouts

Frequency

- Troop campouts are usually once per month and cover a weekend.(leave Friday late afternoon or evening, return Sunday mid-afternoon)
- Summer Camp and Winter Camp are special camps that are one week long and usually are held with other Scout Troops.
- Campouts are rarely cancelled or postponed directly by weather ("Be Prepared!") but sometimes are rescheduled or moved if site conditions are not conducive to a safe campout

Who can come

- Scout
- Father or other appropriate male (optional, but very desirable as they help coach the boys and provide transportation and supervision)

Note that, with the exception of one or two "family campouts" siblings and female family members are usually discouraged from coming on actual Scout campouts.

What do boys bring:

- Appropriate clothing for the campout and season, including closed-toe shoes
- Class A uniform (worn going to and returning from campouts) and Boy Scout Handbook
- poncho or rainsuit
- sleeping bag and mattress or pad (or equivalent)
- plate and cup (metal or heat resistant plastic) and eating utensils
- toiletry supplies, soap, and towel
- bug repellent and sunscreen and, if appropriate, swimsuit
- any needed medical supplies (to be handed to Scoutmaster at start of campout)

The Troop normally provides tents, food, cooking supplies, etc.

A few campouts may require some additional equipment, but this is usually inexpensive or can be rented/borrowed inexpensively. (Example: canoeing campouts require a "dry bag" to keep things dry - these can be purchased, or inexpensive heavy duty trash compactor bags used instead.)

Campout Costs

- **Troop weekend campouts** vary somewhat in cost, depending on distance traveled and special equipment needs (like canoe rental). Many campouts are \$20-40 per participant, which covers food and transport. (Adults assisting with transportation get a mileage reimbursement.) A few campouts (maybe 1 or 2 per year) may be more costly, but rarely exceed \$60/participant.
- Money for the **weekend** campouts is due the Monday before the campout, and **should be in cash** (not check) to make it simpler to buy food, etc.
- **Summer campouts** are roughly \$300-\$400 plus transportation. Transportation costs depend on distance and whether air travel is involved. (Typically the Troop camps one year in Texas and the next year further afield.)
- **"High Adventure"** is a summer camp for the older boys so they can learn and practice more advanced wilderness camping skills and activities. Often separate from Summer Camp.
- **Winter campouts** are typically in Camp Karankawa near Sweeny and Brazoria. These start on Boxing Day (26 December) and end on New Years Eve (31 December). Cost is typically \$250 for this campout, including transport.

The Importance of Campouts

Camping is a necessary part of the outdoorsmanship and leadership that is associated with Scouting. It is not only fun but also extremely instructive. Specific skills are learned on each weekend campout, and the Summer and Winter campouts are a very effective way to earn those merit badges and advance to higher ranks. A boy who does not attend at least a couple Summer and Winter campouts will have a very very hard time earning the Eagle rank, and missing more than half of the weekend campouts will make learning and any advancement very difficult if not impossible.