

Montgomery Village

Boy Scout Troop 1988

Parent Handbook

2010

Scout Oath

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

Scout Law

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

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Welcome to Troop 1988!

We are glad that you are joining our troop. Scouting is the largest and one of the oldest youth organizations around. It is also one that is immediately known and respected by many people throughout the world. Troop 1988 and its leaders believe strongly in the character building that comes from following the Scout Oath and Scout Law. We also believe strongly in parent participation in all Scouting activities. The youth that get the most out of Scouting are those whose parents are visible and active. Parents play a key role in the success of Scouting -they help motivate their sons, provide moral support, and help as they can with troop activities. Their excitement and involvement will rub off on their sons.

Scouts get out of Troop 1988 what they put into it. Leaders try to keep the "outing" in Scouting by offering plenty of activities of all kinds. We ask our Scouts to lead the troop as much as possible. That includes planning and preparing for campouts and weekly meetings. As a Scout learns and grows with us, his responsibilities will increase. Developing self-confidence, self-reliance and leadership are key goals of the Scouting program. We hope this booklet will be useful to you, our new parents and Scouts. Please read it together, along with the first pages in the Scout Handbook. The exciting transition from Webelos to Scouting or entering Scouting for the first time can be confusing at times. Please do not hesitate to ask one of our leaders if you ever have questions, now or any time in the future.

Organization

Troop 1988 was established in 1978 and is part of the Montgomery District of the National Capital Area Council (NCAC) of Boy Scouts.

Troop Adult Leadership 2009-2010

Scoutmaster	Scott Jordan	301-990-9310
Committee Chair	John Rankin	
Secretary	Wendy Szwerc	301-926-2926
Treasurer	Joni Snyder	301-963-5066
Patrol Advisor	Richard Szwerc	301-926-2926
Advancement Chair	Sharon Mastroni	301-963-9090

Communication

There are several ways for parents to stay informed about what is going on in the troop.

Parent Emails

To ensure that you receive all email communication from the Troop we recommend that you sign up as soon as possible to receive the **Troop1988 Yahoo Group** mailings. This is the method that the Scoutmaster, Patrol Advisors and Committee Members use to send emails to adults in the troop. You can join the group by going to <http://groups.yahoo.com> and searching for Troop1988. In order to join the group you will need to create a free Yahoo account.

Scout Folder

Your son will bring home permission slips and other handouts from Troop and Patrol meetings in a folder for you to fill out and return to the next meeting. Your son is responsible for giving you the forms and handing them in to his Patrol Leader at the next meeting.

Website

Be sure to check out the Troop Website, www.bsatroop1988.org for the current Troop calendar, frequently used forms, gear lists, policies, and links to many useful scouting sites.

Scouting, ‘A Family Affair’

The Role of Parents

Scouting is a family affair. No Scout is expected to travel the Trail to Eagle by himself. Parents should encourage their son to work on advancement and take full advantage of the Scouting program. Parents are invited to Troop meetings, monthly Committee meetings, and especially **Courts of Honor**, held three times a year.

On the other hand, it is preferable that parents not sign off on advancement and merit badges for their own sons. Advancements may be signed off by the Scoutmaster, Assistant Scoutmasters, Patrol Advisors, and designated Senior Scouts. **Merit badges** must be signed off by the registered merit badge counselor. A parent cannot be the counselor for his/her son without Troop committee approval.

If a parent has a special skill or training, we encourage her/ him to serve as a **Merit Badge Counselor** for interested Scouts. There are over 120 different merit badges available. A sign-up form is available on the troop website.

Without help of all kinds from our parents, Troop 1988 would not exist. We hope you will take an active part in encouraging your son. Your role as "cheerleader" is a big reason for your son's interest and success. Parents also have a big impact on our **Troop Committee**, which meets just once a month. The time commitment of a committee member is minimal, but your assistance is invaluable. All parents are welcome on the Troop Committee. You do not need scouting experience, only an interest in helping the troop

Our troop also needs parents to assist with special events and to drive to activities. Because the Scouts lead the troop, "helping" is usually just "watching" but your presence can make the difference. National B.S.A. rules require at least two adults at every meeting and activity. Some activities require adults with special training and **EVENTS MUST BE CANCELLED** if sufficient trained leaders are not available.

While we encourage adults to attend camping trips with their scouts, we know that some people prefer to help in other ways. While you will hear often that the troop is ‘boy-led’, it still requires many adults to run a successful troop. Here is a list of a few of the many jobs for which adults can volunteer:

- ✿ Transportation of Scouts
- ✿ Transportation of equipment
- ✿ Treasurer
- ✿ Hospitality for Courts of Honor
- ✿ Roundtable Representative
- ✿ Fundraising
- ✿ Quartermaster
- ✿ Scouting for Food Organizer
- ✿ Ceremony Team Coordinator

Meetings

Troop 1988 holds Troop Meetings on the first, third, fourth and fifth Thursdays of the month, and Patrol Meetings are held on the second Thursday of the month. There are no meetings on school holidays. The Patrol Leader will let the scouts know where the meeting is being held on the 2nd Thursday of each month. The troop calendar is available on the website (www.bsatroop1988.org) to help you keep track of Troop Meetings and Patrol Meetings.

Meeting	Week	Time	Location	Uniform
Troop	1 st , 3 rd , 4 th , 5 th Thursdays	7:30 – 9:00 p.m.	Stedwick CC	Class “A”
Patrol	2 nd Thursday	7:30 – 8:30 p.m.	TBD	Class “B”

Occasionally a meeting will be held at another location for a special event. Scouts and parents will be told about these special meetings as far in advance as practical.

Behavior

The goal of the adult leaders is to have a safe, fun Troop program for the Scouts. The adult leaders have the right to intervene in any situation that they deem unsafe. If a Scout is unwilling to abide by the requirements of the adult leaders in charge, they may require a parent to come get the Scout, whether the situation occurs at a troop meeting or during an outing.

Also, if a Scout is disruptive at a meeting or otherwise prevents the boy leaders from running the meeting, the adult leaders at the meeting may call a parent to pick up the Scout.

Activities

Troop 1988 stays active with a variety of exciting events. Each month our youth leaders (Patrol Leaders' Council or PLC) meet with the Scoutmaster to plan interesting and fun activities, service opportunities, and fundraising events. These include:

Troop Campouts (about once a month)

A week of Summer Camp (usually held the week of July 4)

Scouting for Food (November or February)

Montgomery Village Flea Market/Hot Dog Stand (May)

July 4 Parade/Bingo Tent

Wreath Sales (Oct/Nov)

A summer High Adventure activity (for older scouts every 2 or 3 years)

See <http://www.bsatroop1988.org> for more details.

The troop's monthly campouts are chosen by the scouts each spring for the following year. The scouts vote for their top choices from a list of possible trips. Some popular trips are chosen every year!

Dues/Fees

We try hard to keep the cost of Scouting reasonable, but some costs cannot be avoided. The yearly registration fee registers your son, pays for Boy's Life magazine (optional) and supplementary accident insurance.

Scouts who owe money may not be able to receive advancement or take part in activities until obligations are paid. A Scout is Thrifty. However, the troop policy is that no boy should miss out on scouting for financial reasons. If the costs of Scouting present problems, please discuss it with a leader in private.

Scout Accounts

When a scout participates in the Troop fundraisers a portion of the money he earns goes to his 'scout account'. These funds can be used to pay for monthly trips, towards paying for summer camp or to buy camping equipment. If a scout wants to pay for a trip using his scout account he should ask the Scribe for a blank 'check'. He can fill it in and hand it in with his permission slip. The Troop treasurer will then take the funds from his account.

If your scout wants to pay for some camping equipment using his scout account he should submit the receipt to the treasurer who will then reimburse him.

Leadership

Adult Leaders

There is always room for anyone who wants to take a more active role in working with the Scouts and Adult Leaders. Council training programs are held several times a year, and everyone is encouraged to take advantage of them. Many training courses are now available online making it very easy for parents to take these courses at their own convenience. You can find the online training opportunities at <http://scouting.org/training>.

Youth Protection Training

The Boy Scouts of America requires that adults take Youth Protection training within the first 90 days of becoming an adult leader and the training **MUST** be renewed every two (2) years. Further, BSA Youth Protection Training is now **required** for at least one adult present during any event or activity needing a local or national tour permit. The troop encourages all parents and adults who work with the Troop to take the Youth Protection training. The safety of our scouts is our top priority.

Troop Committee

Our Troop Committee of parents and leaders oversees all activities and is the ultimate authority concerning troop operations. As described throughout this booklet, parent involvement in the committee is very important. The committee meets at 7:30 p.m., the first Tuesday of each month for about 1 1/2 hours. The meetings are held at North Creek Community Center. The committee helps with record keeping, advancement, including Board of Reviews, fund raising and long-range planning. Committee Members work with the Scoutmaster and other troop leaders to ensure an interesting, successful and safe troop. Parents are welcome to express their views at any time. In order to officially vote as a Committee member an adult must be registered in the Troop. An adult registered with BSA is known as a Scouter.

Scoutmaster

The Scoutmaster is responsible for day-to-day troop operations, and is in charge of scout meetings and activities. The Scoutmaster answers to the Troop Committee. Assistant Scoutmasters (Patrol Advisors) work with the Scoutmaster and the youth leaders to carry out meeting plans and activities.

Patrol Advisor

The patrol advisor is an assistant scoutmaster who is assigned to a Patrol in the troop. He/she works with the Patrol Leader and Assistant Patrol Leader to support them in leading the patrol using the **patrol method**.

Youth Leadership

A major goal of Scouting is to develop leadership skills in our sons. Youth leaders are elected by their peers to help run the troop. The highest youth leader is the **Senior Patrol Leader**, or **SPL**. The SPL runs the troop activities, with the Scoutmaster's help, following a plan decided at monthly **Patrol Leaders Council** (PLC) meetings and a general planning session of the **Leadership Corps**.

Parents of new scouts have a natural tendency to want to lead the scouts, as was necessary in Cub Scouts. In Boy Scouts the parents do not run the meeting; the youth leaders do. Parents please try and curb your instincts; *don't do something for your son that he can do for himself*. Sometimes the best education is to fail and overcome your failure. The lessons learned are not forgotten and the young man (your son) will develop self-reliance and self confidence.

Leadership Corps

The leadership corps is made up of older scouts including the Senior Patrol Leader (SPL), Assistant Senior Patrol Leader (ASPL), Junior Assistant Scoutmasters (JASM's), Scribe, Historian, Quartermaster, Librarian, and Order of the Arrow (OA) representative. Smaller troops may not have enough older scouts to fill all of these leadership positions.

Patrol Leaders' Council

The PLC is made up of the SPL, ASPL, all Patrol Leaders and the Scoutmaster. They meet regularly to plan the programs for Troop Meetings and camping trips.

Patrol Method

Our troop is organized into patrols of six to twelve scouts, each with an elected Patrol Leader. The Patrol Leaders and Assistant Patrol Leaders have a key role in helping the SPL and adult leaders accomplish the goals of the troop. New scouts work with an adult Assistant Scoutmaster and/or a Junior Assistant Scoutmaster (an older boy, usually a Life Scout or a high school junior or senior), to learn the skills needed to advance and grow in our troop. This working together is called the "Patrol Method" and is a cornerstone of successful scouting.

“The patrol method is not a way to operate a Boy Scout troop, it is the only way. Unless the patrol method is in operation, you don't really have a Boy Scout troop.”

—Robert S. S. Baden-Powell

Required Equipment

The Boy Scout Handbook

Every Scout is required to have a copy of The Official Boy Scout Handbook. As your son advances in rank, Scout Leaders will date and sign off the completion of each requirement in the handbook. It will become a valuable record of your son's achievements. He must have this record with him when he appears before a Board of Review for rank advancement. The Troop recommends that the Scout's name be written on the side (white page edges) in black marker so that it can be readily identified. Since this book will be taken on camping trips it is also a good idea to purchase a durable cover or to keep the book in a Ziploc bag. Covers are available for purchase at the NCAC Scout shop. Some parents also periodically copy completed pages of the book in case it is lost.



Daypack

There are several items that your scout should bring to each Troop and Patrol meeting: **his Boy Scout Handbook, a folder for permission slips, a notebook and a pencil.** In order to help keep these items safe we recommend that he have a small **backpack** in which to store these items. Please encourage your son to bring these items to troop meetings and activities each week and to always return his handbook to his pack so he doesn't lose it.

Camping Equipment

Camping is a key part of a Scout troop (it's the OUTING in Scouting), and some simple equipment is needed to be comfortable and enjoy the experience. **A sleeping bag, plate and eating utensils, rain gear and a flashlight are the key items needed for the first campout.** A full list of camping equipment is in our troop website. Pocket knives may be carried after the Totin' Chip card is earned. Lockback and sheath knives are not allowed for safety reasons. The Scout Handbook is a good source for additional information on what to pack.

Before buying expensive items like sleeping bags, boots and backpacks, we strongly suggest you use suitable family gear or borrow for the first few trips. This lets you see what is needed, what others use, research purchases, and take advantage of sales. Troop 1988's leaders have camped for years, and can suggest money-saving substitutes, or recommend good quality equipment that will survive the rigors of Scout camping. Group items such as tents, lanterns, stoves, and cooking equipment are furnished by the troop.

Reminder: Label Everything!

Please label all of your son's belongings. Many boys have identical items, particularly troop shirts, ponchos, neckerchiefs and these items are frequently misplaced on camping trips and at meetings!

Tip: silver sharpies work very well on dark items!

Camping Trips

Most troop camping trips begin at Stedwick Community Center at 6:45 pm on Friday where the scouts and adult leaders gather and load up the vehicles. The scouts usually get home by noon on Sunday, depending on the location.

Permission Slips

Permission Slips for troop camping trips are handed out to the scouts at Troop meetings several weeks before each trip. The scout should give the form to his parent so that it can be completed and returned with any required payment at the next Troop meeting. Please make sure that you complete all parts of the form. It is important for the leaders planning the trip to know who is available to drive gear and/or scouts, and who is planning to stay so they can purchase enough food. **The Scout needs to return the form even if he is not going on the trip. Parents should keep the bottom portion which has the trip details and emergency contact information**

Meal Fees

Menu planning is done by the patrols before each campout and one or two scouts from a patrol will shop for the food prior to the weekend campout. The scouts will then divide the cost of the food purchased by the number of campers, less any money collected from adult campers, to determine how much money each scout owes for his weekend food. This amount should be paid to the patrol leader at the next meeting.

Care of Troop Equipment

When your scout returns from a weekend troop camping trip he will probably come home with more than he left with! Specifically, he will regularly bring home an item of patrol gear that he will be responsible for cleaning and returning to the troop at the next troop meeting. He may be asked to bring home a tent, a Dutch oven, a camping stove or maybe a Patrol box. The troop has made a considerable investment in this gear, and help from scouts and their parents goes a long way towards making it last.

You can find detailed instructions on how to care for each piece of equipment on the Troop website. Some items, such as the tents, should be aired out as soon as possible after the scouts return home to prevent mildew. Please make sure that your son takes care of the equipment assigned to him and returns it promptly at the next meeting so it is ready for the next camping trip.

Parents Camping

Parents are welcome and encouraged to attend camping trips with the troop. However, adults who camp need to bring their own tent, sleeping bag, ground pad and a mess kit. The cooking on camping trips is done by the scouts and they will cook enough to feed adult leaders and guests. Adults pay a small fee for each meal to the scouts.

Advancement

Advancement is the way a boy grows as a Scout. He starts as a "Scout" and progresses to "Eagle" in the following order: Scout, Tenderfoot, Second Class, First Class, Star, Life, Eagle. Advancement is how he becomes eligible for troop leadership positions, high adventure camping trips, and honors such as election to the Order of the Arrow, Scouting's honor camping society.

Although a boy starts at "Scout" rank, he can progress to First Class rank within two years. To do this, he will work with other first year scouts and with youth and adult leaders. He should bring his Scout Handbook to every meeting and activity. This is very important so his progress can be promptly recorded.

Scoutmaster Conference

Once your scout has completed the requirements for a new rank and has all requirements signed off, he should tell the Scoutmaster that he is ready for a scoutmaster conference. The Scoutmaster will schedule a time to meet with your scout to ask him about what learned while working on the rank requirements and about his experience in the Troop. He should take his Scout Handbook to this meeting. At the end of this meeting the Scoutmaster will tell the Scout to call the Advancement Chair to schedule a **Board of Review**.

Board of Review

After a boy has completed a rank, and had a scoutmaster conference, *he* needs to tell the Advancement Chairperson so he can have a Board of Review. Boards are currently held on the second Wednesday of each month. The Board of Review is made up of at least three adult members of the Troop Committee. The Board will check to make sure the boy's Scout Handbook and other records are up to date. They will also ask him about what he learned while working on the badge or rank, and what he thinks about the troop in general. This may sound scary to the Scout, but it really isn't. The people on the Board of Review are typically the parents of current and past scouts in Troop 1988. They all want to see the Scout succeed and grow with the troop. You should save all written work and projects you do for merit badges and rank. Advancement is the Scout's responsibility. **The Scout should call the Advancement Chair to request a Board of Review no later than 6:00 p.m. of the Sunday preceding the scheduled Board.**

Court of Honor

The accomplishments of Scouts and leaders are formally recognized at Courts of Honor, held three times per year, in October, February and June. Parents' attendance at Courts of Honor is an important and very easy way to demonstrate an interest in your son's Scouting progress. Although Scouts are formally recognized at Courts of Honor, they receive their rank patches upon completion of the Board of Review. They are also recognized in front of their peers at the next regularly scheduled troop meeting.

Merit Badges

Once a boy reaches First Class, Merit Badges become the main advancement tool although a scout can begin working on merit badges at any rank. There are over 120 merit badges to choose from. Some badges, like Pets, Athletics, Theater and Citizenship, may be worked on in school or at home. Boys may



work independently on merit badges that interest them. Leaders may help by allowing time to work on some badges during patrol meetings or days designated as Merit Badge Day. Camping offers many opportunities as well.

When a Scout is ready to begin work on a merit badge, he asks the Scoutmaster for the name of a counselor, and a "**blue card**". The blue card is a merit badge application and records progress towards the completion of the merit badge. A Scout must get the Scoutmaster's permission and a Blue Merit Badge Card BEFORE starting work on a badge. This allows leaders to follow up, while he works with a specific, approved counselor who has experience in the subject.



A useful resource to find out the requirements for particular merit badges is available online: <http://meritbadge.org> . For each merit badge there is also a merit badge booklet giving more detailed information about each subject. The troop has some of the more popular books available to lend to scouts. Other merit badge books are available for purchase at the NCAC Scout Shop. The requirements do change from time to time so it is wise to check online to make sure the book reflects the current requirements.

Snow Owl



The Snow Owl Award (signified by the patch shown) is a winter camping and survival training program for older scouts and adults. It is presented to those scouts and adults who have demonstrated that they possess the knowledge and skills to safely camp in cold weather. This B.S.A.-recognized award is exclusive to Troop 1988, meaning that it is not offered by any other scouting unit. The Snow Owl emblem appears on our troop t-shirts, and we are very proud of the Snow Owl program. The requirements for the Snow Owl Award are available on the troop website.

Records

When your son earns a merit badge or a rank advancement he will receive a Rank card or the completed “blue card” at the following Court of Honor along with his merit badge or rank pin. These cards are an official record of your son’s progress in Scouting and they should be kept in a safe place. A binder with plastic trading card inserts works well to keep the cards organized. Your son will be required to take this binder to each Board of Review. You may also save the programs from each Court of Honor which documents the achievement and the date of the Court of Honor.

Medical Forms

The Boy Scouts of America recommends that all youth and adult members have annual medical evaluations by a certified and licensed health-care provider.

The BSA Medical form is a three part form:

Parts A and C are to be completed annually by all BSA unit members. Both parts are required. This form is good for events that do not exceed 72 consecutive hours. Part C is a ‘Parental Informed Consent and Hold Harmless/Release Agreement’

Part B **must be completed by any scout or adult going to summer camp** or any event that exceeds 72 consecutive hours. This part requires a physical exam for both adults and scouts and must be signed by a doctor.

If your son is scheduled for an Annual Physical, we highly recommend getting your Class 3 updated and on file with the troop to avoid an extra visit before summer camp.

There is a link to the medical forms from the troop website.

Uniform

There are a few things that Scouts need right away to begin the Scouting trail: a Boy Scout Uniform and a Scout Handbook. The uniform is the place to wear all the awards a new Scout will soon be earning; the handbook tracks a boy's progress from his first meeting. For information about where to place the patches go to the **Insignia Chart** at <http://bsatroop1988.org/pdf/insignia.pdf> . This link is available from the troop website.

Class “A”

The Class “A” uniform consists of an official Boy Scout shirt with proper insignia, troop neckerchief and slide, and pants or shorts that are a solid color and worn with a belt (i.e., not sweatpants or gym shorts). A new boy starter kit consisting of a neckerchief, slide, red (or green) epaulets, troop numeral patch, patrol patch, and handbook is available from the Committee Chairperson. Uniform shirts can be purchased at the NCAC Scout Shop. Outgrown uniforms are sometimes available at troop meetings.

The Class “A” uniform should be worn at every Troop Meeting, Board of Review and Court of Honor as well as other official scout events.

Class “B”

The Troop also has an activity uniform ("Class B"), consisting of a red "Snow Owl" T-shirt. These shirts are available for purchase from the Troop. An order form is available on the Troop website.

The Class “B” uniform is worn to Patrol Meetings, on camping trips and other times that leaders specifically announce.

Merit Badge Sash

Once your scout has earned a few merit badges he will want to display them. Merit Badges are displayed on a Merit Badge Sash which is worn formally with a Class “A” uniform at Courts of Honor and other special events. The sash is available from the NCAC Scout Shop.



Useful Information

Scout Shop

The NCAC Scout Shop is located at:

9190 Rockville Pike
Bethesda, MD 20814-3897
(301) 564-1091

HOURS of OPERATION:

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday: 9 am - 5:30 pm
Thursday: 9 am - 8 pm
Saturday: 10 am - 3 pm

Websites

<http://bsatroop1988.org> Troop 1988

<http://groups.yahoo.com> Yahoo Group 'Troop1988'

<http://www.boyscouts-ncac.org> National Capital Area Council

<http://bsatroop1988.org/pdf/insignia.pdf> Insignia Chart

<http://meritbadge.org> Merit Badge Information

<http://scouting.org/training> Online Training

<http://www.bsahandbook.org> Boy Scout Handbook Online

<http://www.scoutstuff.org> Online scout store

Notes

