

# Welcome to Troop 420!

Information for New Scouts and Their Families, 2008

*We are very pleased that you have decided to join Troop 420 and participate in scouting. We hope that you have tons of fun, learn a lot, and look back on this as one of the greatest experiences of your life. Hang on to this booklet. It has a lot of information about how the Troop runs and what you'll need to know and do as a Troop 420 Scout.*

## **Troop Website**

Our recently updated troop website has valuable information: [www.Troop420.org](http://www.Troop420.org).

## **Meetings and Monthly Activities**

Our regular troop meetings are Monday evenings, 7:15 - 8:30 p.m. During the spring of 2008, we'll meet in the "cafetorium" at Van Hise elementary school (unless a different location is announced). Generally, the Troop meets every Monday that school is open *except* the Monday after a monthly outing. That Monday is usually reserved for a Patrol Leaders Council (PLC), at which the youth leadership of the troop meets to plan the next month's activities. Scouts should **bring their Boy Scout Handbook to troop meetings**; we will use them for advancement activities.

Each month except July, we have a weekend outing. Note that there are campouts in June and August even though we do not have troop meetings during the summer. In July, we attend a week-long Boy Scout camp rather than having a weekend outing. As soon as boys turn in their registration form for Boy Scouts and complete their joining requirements they are eligible to attend monthly outings.

## **Boy Scout Uniform**

As soon as he is registered as a Boy Scout, a scout has the privilege of wearing the Boy Scout uniform, which in Troop 420 we wear to **all troop meetings** and **travel to and from all outings**. Scouts wear a "Class A" uniform to all Troop meetings and for travel to and from summer camp: scout pants, scout belt, a scout shirt (short- or long-sleeved), neckerchief and neckerchief slide (required for Scoutmaster conferences and Courts of Honor) or Scout bolo, and the following insignia: Glacier's Edge Council patch, red epaulets, and the numerals 420. Scout socks are encouraged, but not mandatory; boys can wear white socks instead. Optional patches include the 25-year unit patch, the quality unit patch, and the International Scouting patch. Each boy will receive a scout neckerchief, epaulets, 420 numeral strip, 25-year patch and (if appropriate) quality unit patch when he joins the Troop. Once the Scout is assigned to a patrol, he will receive a patrol patch.

All parts of the scout uniform are available for purchase from the new Scout Office at 5846 Manufacturers Drive Madison, WI 53704-6278. In addition, the Troop operates a uniform exchange, to which scouts can donate scout shirts, pants, shorts, and belts they have outgrown for use (free of charge) by younger scouts. We understand that there can be problems and delays getting a uniform, but as soon as a scout gets his uniform he should wear it. If you have any questions about where patches go on the uniform, please ask before they are sewn on so that they won't need to be moved. The Scout Handbook and the uniform information sheet (enclosed) show where most of the patches go.

## **Monthly Outings (Campouts)**

Our monthly outings are almost always in the state of Wisconsin and involve a variety of activities. These outings are a combination of adventure and learning. On most outings, especially for First Year Scouts, we work on requirements for advancement. Thus, ***it is important for First-Year Scouts to attend as many outings as possible.*** Scouts need to accumulate five activities (outings, Eagle Court of Honors, service projects, and other troop activities other than troop meetings and Court of Honor) to advance to Second Class rank, and 10 activities to advance to First Class rank.

Except for the day trip in December, outings will typically run from Saturday morning through early Sunday afternoon, although approximately 1 – 2 times per year we will have an outing that starts on Friday evening. At the end of each outing, scouts are dropped off ***at home.*** On winter outings (Jan. - March) we stay indoors; the other months feature overnight campouts. Transportation is provided by parents; usually, drivers stay for the overnight. Parents are expected to attend outings at least twice a year, but are welcome to come along on more outings. There is a nominal cost for each outing to cover food expenses (\$2 - \$3 per meal) and special activities (such as a museum fee).

***Sign-up deadlines*** for outings are always announced in the Troop Newsletter. They are usually the Monday night Troop meeting 11-12 days before the campout, see Steve Fellingner, Treasurer (833-0034). Last minute sign-ups are discouraged so that we can recruit the appropriate leadership and give the boys enough time to make necessary preparations (e.g., planning patrol meals and group activities). The scout contacts Mr. Fellingner to sign up for the out and make arrangements for paying the outing fees (i.e., asks that funds be taken out of his troop account or provides a check) when he signs up. If the scout cannot make the Troop meeting to sign up he should call the Scoutmaster, Mr. Fargo (437-6905) before the meeting to sign up. Scouts who sign up are committing themselves to the food charges; refunds are not provided unless the scout becomes ill. If a scout must miss an outing for which he has signed up, ***notify Mr. Fargo before the outing*** (437-6905).

***Medications:*** All medication that a scout needs to take during an outing should be checked in to the Scoutmaster, who will make sure that it is given to the scout at the appropriate time. Check with the Scoutmaster or the Assistant Scoutmaster in charge of the First Year Scouts if there is anything else about your scout that we should be aware of during the outing.

***Equipment:*** The Troop provides most of the equipment necessary for outings. Scouts will need a sleeping bag (rated at 20 – 30 degrees or so; put in an extra blanket if needed), flashlight (headlamps are popular), eating utensils (but not plates or cups), and personal hygiene gear. Scouts need to be ***prepared for bad weather*** on campouts (cold, wind, rain, snow). Rain gear is always required for campouts, regardless of the weather forecast. The rain gear should be packed near the top of the bag or backpack because scouts will be required to show the Senior Patrol Leader before departing on the outing. Depending on weather, the scout should also pack warm clothing, an adequate jacket, gloves or mittens, and (*especially* for sleeping) a knit hat. Scouts without appropriate gear will not be permitted to leave on the outing. Gear is easily carried in a duffel bag or a backpack.

***Prohibited items:*** First Year Scouts should not bring any bladed instruments (knives, etc.) to outings (or even to Troop meetings) until they have earned their Totin Chip. They must carry their Totin chip with them whenever they have a bladed instrument. In addition, these items are prohibited by Troop policy: electronic gear (Nintendo game units, PSPs, MP-3 players, radios, tape or CD players: electronic games, laser pens, etc.), aerosol cans (including aerosol mosquito repellent), firearms, ammunition, archery gear, fireworks of any kind, alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs, liquid fuel (including cigarette lighters), candles, skateboards, martial arts devices, and some kinds of knives. Parents/ guardians of scouts who bring prohibited items may be asked to pick up their scout and take him home. Prohibited items will be confiscated and returned to the scout's parents.

## **Summer Camp**

All New Scouts are eligible to go to Camp Phillips this summer, and ***we strongly hope that all will go!***

Going to summer camp is one of the biggest events of our entire scout year, and New Scouts complete over half of the requirements they will need for Second Class and First Class ranks as well as earn two merit badges! Camp Phillips is located near Haugen, WI, about 10 miles north of Rice Lake. It is an *excellent* scout camp with great aquatics, rifle and shotgun ranges, an archery range, nature area, Indian lore, a handicraft area, Scoutcraft skills, and tons of opportunities to earn merit badges. The camp is set on a 1,400 acre site, including 5 lakes with fishing and excellent swimming. We stay in screened cabins in three beautiful campsites. Each cabin houses four boys. We will describe the summer camp program in detail at the “*Camp Phillips Night*” Troop meeting in late Spring.

***Please reserve the dates for summer camp: (July 20 - 26).*** The camp fee (approximately \$260) covers round trip transportation (on a chartered, air conditioned bus), meals, waterfront, the activity areas, use of boats, canoes and sailcraft, and camp patch. Some merit badge classes have additional fees. The Scoutmaster, several Assistant Scoutmasters, and other parents will be in camp the full week we are there—in addition to a fine camp staff.

### **Finances**

Like all organizations, it costs money to run a scout troop. We have extensive camping equipment to buy and maintain for the patrols, camping fees along with national dues to pay, merit and advancement badges to acquire, *Boys' Life* subscriptions for each scout, mailing costs, etc. The three major sources of revenue for the troop are (a) member dues, (b) outing fees, and (c) fund-raising.

***Dues.*** The dues for the 2008 program year are approximately \$15/month. Generally, dues are collected in October for a full year, but New Scouts begin paying dues the month that they join the troop. Their annual fee is pro-rated, based on the number of months they will be in the troop. We will set up a **troop account** for each boy, and additional money (beyond dues) can be deposited in this account, then used for various expenses such as outing fees, summer camp registration, etc. See Steve Fellingner to set up an account. When the scout signs up for an event, he can tell the person collecting money to take the fee out of his troop account.

***Outing fees.*** The troop pays most of the costs of weekend outings except food, which usually runs around \$10 per weekend (depending on how many meals are prepared), a \$1 activity fee, and the cost of special activities such as downhill skiing, museum fees, or raft rentals. Outing fees are collected when scouts sign up for the event. The outing fee will be refunded if (but only if) the scout is too ill to attend.

***Fund-raising.*** The troop also raises a considerable portion of its budget through fund-raising. We recently completed a wreath sales program in order to purchase new tents for the troop. We sell popcorn, with the troop's proceeds from the individual sales going into the scout's troop account. *All scouts and families are expected to participate in fund-raisers.* First Year Scouts earn activity credit for advancement by participating.

***Financial Help.*** The Troop Committee wants to ensure that limited family finances don't interfere with any boy's opportunity to be a scout and participate fully in the program, ***including going to summer camp.*** We have money set aside in the troop treasury to help out in these cases. If you are interested, please talk to the Scoutmaster.

### **Advancement**

As boys continue to participate in the troop they will advance in rank from Boy Scout to Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class, then on to the advanced ranks of Star, Life, and Eagle. The specific requirements for each rank are listed in the Boy Scout Handbook. We work on these requirements during Troop meetings and outings as well as at summer camp. Thus, the key to advancement is ***participation.*** Scouts who regularly attend meetings and outings will advance more quickly than those who do not. There is enough variation among scouts in interests, skills, and motivation that there will be quite a bit of variation in how quickly they move through the ranks. It is important to understand that ***the advancement program is not a race.*** There is no premium placed on achieving a rank or the Eagle rank in the least time possible. The idea is to make ***regular, planned progress toward goals.***

The First Year Scout program is designed to help scouts advance from Boy Scout to First Class rank during the course of one calendar year. This is a very structured program closely guided by several assistant scoutmasters, troop guides (older scouts who work with the first-year scouts), and some parents. Unlike Cub Scouts, in which boys often completed requirements at home under parents' supervision, **requirements for these initial Boy Scout ranks are completed at troop meetings and outings** under the supervision of the adult and boy leadership in the troop. So, regular participation is needed to advance through these lower ranks. In fact, scouts must participate in 5 activities (outings and service projects) to achieve Second Class rank and 5 more for First Class. Each of the ranks also has a very important **Scout Spirit** requirement. This means living by the Scout Oath and Law at all times. The meaning of this requirement is discussed in the Scout Handbook.

Summer camp offers excellent opportunities for advancement work, particularly for First Year Scouts. **Our advancement program is built around the expectation that scouts will attend summer camp.** We will complete **over half** of the Second Class and First Class advancement requirements during summer camp. In subsequent years, scouts can work on an extensive array of merit badges at summer camp, in addition to all the other things that Camp Phillips has to offer.

Beyond First Class, scouts have much more freedom in selecting the activities (mostly, merit badge work) that they will use for advancement. At this point, scouts can tailor the program to their individual interests; they also take on more responsibility for scheduling their advancement work at summer camp and during the academic year. Troop meetings in the spring, however, are generally devoted to merit badge work.

### **How Adults Can Help**

We couldn't be a scout troop without the support and assistance of parents and guardians. Please consider becoming an Assistant Scoutmaster. You don't need to be an outdoor expert or a former Boy Scout; the Council provides excellent training. You don't need to devote a huge amount of time; there are many others with whom you will share responsibilities. Women as well as men are welcome in all troop activities. The troop provides all camping equipment except for personal gear (sleeping bag, tent, clothes, etc.). Serving as an Assistant Scoutmaster provides you with a unique opportunity to watch your son develop, to share experiences with him, and to have a lasting influence on many other lives. If interested, contact the Scoutmaster.

We also need adults to serve on the Troop Committee that oversees all the activities of the troop, to be merit badge counselors, to help drive on campouts, to go to summer camp (Camp Phillips) as an adult leader, and to assist in a variety of other ways. One especially important way that parents and guardians can help is by encouraging their child to attend regularly and praising their work on advancement. Also, from time to time we have special nights for parents to visit the troop. Parents are welcome anytime, but we particularly encourage parents and guardians to attend these events.

### **Problems or Concerns**

The first month or two in the troop is a prime time for problems to occur. There can be paperwork errors, misunderstandings about expectations, challenges adjusting to the different organization of a Boy Scout troop, or problems caused by individual or older scouts. If problems do arise, **CALL THE SCOUTMASTER, Daryl Fargo (437-6905)** or contact **ASSISTANT SCOUTMASTER, STEVE QUINTANA (238-4211)**, who coordinates the First Year Scout program. We will do everything we can to make the transition to Boy Scouts a successful one! Please understand that **no** form of hazing or harassment is acceptable in this troop. There are no initiations or other such events tolerated. If a scout does not feel welcome because of the actions of someone else in the troop, he and/or you should discuss it with a scoutmaster or assistant scoutmaster as soon as possible.

### **Finally, Thank You!**

We consider it a privilege to be working with your child. It is exciting to watch each of the boys grow as they acquire new skills and take on leadership positions. We hope this will be a fun and meaningful adventure for your entire family.