

Your Transition to Boy Scouting with Troop 51 - 2010

www.troop51bsa.us

Welcome

Scouts and Parents, welcome to Troop 51. We are excited and happy to have you join us. “Be Prepared” for a great time. Parents, Boy Scouting is the next developmental step for your son. Our mission is to build character and provide an atmosphere where all scouts can have fun, enjoy scouting, learn skills, advance at their own pace, help themselves and others, and become responsible leaders in the community. At Troop 51 we take this as a serious commitment on our part and your part.

Boy Scouting is about having fun and learning about being an adult.

The boys run the troop! They plan the campouts and activities. The yearly calendar is created with them, by them and for them in mind. They manage the meetings and they take turns learning what it means to be a leader. Adult leaders serve in an advisory capacity, facilitating and supervising the activities of the scouts.

Terminology

Here are some quick comparisons to help you understand what we are talking about.

- **Troop** = Pack
- **Patrol** = Den - A patrol is usually between 6 & 10 scouts.
- **Senior Patrol Leader (SPL)** is the scout in charge of the Troop. He is elected by the Troop every 6 months.
- **Assistant Senior Patrol Leader (ASPL)** helps the SPL. He is chosen by the SPL.
- **Patrol Leader (PL)** is the scout in charge of the Patrol. The scouts in the patrol elect him every 6 months.
- **Assistant Patrol Leader (APL)** helps the patrol leader.
- **Patrol Leader’s Conference (PLC)** is a meeting we hold every month to plan activities and assign responsibilities for the coming month. All scouts are invited and encouraged to attend.
- **Board of Review (BOR)** is a panel of adult committee members who review a scout’s qualifications for advancement. The BOR also provides an opportunity for the scout to talk with adults about their scouting experience, goals and ideas for improvement of the troop. These are held monthly, usually on the 2nd meeting of the month.
- **Court of Honor (COH)** is the meeting where rank advancement, merit badges and awards are officially recognized. They are held quarterly in March, June, September and December. Actual rank advancement may occur at any time, but the recognition takes place at the COH.

Troop 51
Herndon, VA 20171

Uniforms

Scouts are expected to wear their uniform to every scout meeting. A “Class A” uniform consists of a uniform shirt (tucked in), uniform pants/shorts, a scout belt AND socks. The Troop 51 neckerchief is not required for regular meetings, but is required for Board of Reviews.

Scouts MUST wear their FULL Class A uniform (shirt, pants/shorts, belt, socks and neckerchief) while traveling to and from a campout or activity, during a Board of Review and at any Court of Honor or other important scout sponsored event.

A “Class B” Uniforms is a scout T-Shirt worn during the summer and other activities. These are any scout related t-shirt. We have Troop 51 t-shirts for sale for \$15.

Troop Meetings

Troop meetings are Wednesdays at Floris United Methodist Church. Meetings begin at 7:15 PM and end around 8:30 PM. The end time is dependent on the number of activities planned and the organization of the scouts. Each meeting consists of the following activities:

Opening	5 minutes	(Flag ceremony, introductions, uniform inspections)
Announcements	5 minutes	
Patrol corners	10 minutes	(Patrol business handled, dues collected, etc.)
Advancement	30 to 45 minutes	(Rank advancement and/or merit badge work)
Game	10 to 15 minutes	
Closing	5 minutes	(Scoutmaster’s minute, taps, closing moment)

As a parent, be prepared for what appears to be chaos. It may look like this because our troop is scout led. With luck and after a little training, what we hope to achieve is organized chaos. Each scout must learn to lead in some capacity and part of that learning is in how to conduct a meeting.

After each campout or weekend activity, The Patrol Leader’s Council (PLC) meets. This is held at the same time as a regular meeting and is run by the SPL. Here we plan for upcoming activities, make decisions having to do with the troop and assign responsibilities. All scouts are encouraged to attend this meeting because this is where they can have a say on upcoming activities.

Troop 51
Herndon, VA 20171

Every parent is encouraged to become an active member of the Troop. It is important to have as many as possible so no one individual has to do everything. There is training for those interested in taking a larger role in the development of our scouts. Mothers can also be assistant scoutmasters or sit on the committee. We are quite fortunate to have many active adults.

Troop Committee

If you do not want to be an assistant scoutmaster you can be a committee member. The Troop Committee is responsible for the overall administrative, financial and functional health of the Troop. As a committee member, you can sit on the Board of Review. This is how a boy advances in rank. The Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmasters ensure he knows all the skills. It is the Board of Review's job to ensure he has grown in his understanding of leadership, goals, direction and commitments. **This is a once a month activity held during the 2nd Troop meeting each month - it is extremely important.** Here again, the gift of your time is key to our success as a troop. Please contact the Committee Chair with your interests.

Committee Chair – Ed Kelley
Advancement Chair – Dan Lohmann
Secretary – Sherry Rhodes
Chartered Organization Rep – Rob Duston
Treasurer – Bob Gregor
Activities Chair – Jim Booth
Uniform Chair – Brian Gilley
Training Chair – Jill Luttgies
Equipment Chair – Brian Gilley
Fund Raising Chair – Peter Fish
Court of Honor Activities Team -

The Scouts

We allow the boys to make mistakes – it is part of the learning process. This is dramatically different from Cub Scouts, where everyone succeeded, all the time. In the Boy Scout environment, occasionally, the scouts fail. The adult leaders will ensure no one fails to the extent they will be hurt; however, if a scout decides to cook his spaghetti only half as long as the directions say, they will have a crunchy dinner. Scouting is about learning lessons and then helping others. Anytime a scout experiences a situation where they could have done better, the adult leadership and/or older scouts will help guide them to a better way. Most corrective actions are aimed at the group as a whole so everyone can share in the learning.

We also let them see a lot of teamwork. Initially, this will come from the adults – so they can observe how working together as a team (patrol) gets things done faster. The patrol method is key to the success of each individual scout.

Troop 51
Herndon, VA 20171

One of the most important rules in scouting is always using “the Buddy System”. A scout will NEVER be left alone by themselves anywhere and all adult leaders will practice “Two Deep Leadership”. Both of these are designed to protect the scouts and provide a safe environment for them to grow and prosper.

The adults are there for safety purposes and for advice and counsel. Your son needs to know that he can quietly come to any of the leaders and talk to us about any problem he is having, regardless of the nature, and we will keep it confidential. We also welcome constructive feedback and positive ideas to better the scouting experience.

Camping and Activities

We have at least one campout/hike/activity every month. This is where the boys learn, practice and work on skills for advancement as well as just have a GREAT time hanging together.

You are welcomed to camp with us ANYTIME. Mothers and siblings, this includes you. We have an Adult Patrol (the Deadwood Patrol) that is lead by at least 2 trained Scoutmasters – usually 4 or 5. The adults normally have as much or more fun than the scouts do.

We do two types of camping – “plop” and backpacking. **“Plop”** camping is just what it sounds like – we plop down and camp. We drive all equipment and backpacks in to the site. Scouts have the luxury of bringing more gear to make their stay comfortable. New scouts will go on several of these before they try our second type of camping.

“Backpacking” involves hiking to and from our campsite or hiking from campsite to campsite. This summer we will do 2 to 4 backpacking hikes of 5 to 10 miles each. We will train the scouts before they ever start out. In this kind of camping, scouts must carry their own gear and some patrol gear. This is more strenuous and will be done after each individual scout has proven he is ready. Backpacking also requires some specific gear, for instance, lightweight backpacking stoves, specialized food, lightweight packs and sleeping bags.

On campouts we do not allow electronic equipment of any kind, soda, magazines, etc. They are welcome to bring appropriate reading material, like the Scout Handbook or the Scout Fieldbook. These should be placed in a zip lock plastic bag for protection from the rain.

The Troop provides cooking utensils, stoves, lanterns, pots/pans, etc. but NOT Tents – the boys need to have a tent, sleeping bag, etc.

For each campout one or two boys are assigned as **“Grub Master”**. The grubmasters buy the food for their Patrol. When it is your son’s turn to be grubmaster, please let him buy the food with only reasonable guidance from you. The Patrol plans their meals and buying the food is part of rank advancement/learning. One area where you can assist your son is by advising on “portion control”. Too often scouts buy way too much food for the number of scouts attending.

Troop 51
Herndon, VA 20171

We expect the cost of food for a weekend campout to be less than \$12 per boy, proper portion control should help with this.

Troop Funding

Dues are \$5.00 a month or \$15.00 a quarter. Dues are collected quarterly at a scout meeting. Dues payment must be kept current. Scouts may not be allowed to attend campouts or receive awards if their accounts are more than three months in arrears.

Many scout outings also require a separate activity fee. These are usually \$10.00 or less when they are charged. There is also a re-charter fee in January of each year of around \$20.00. This includes the re-charter fee, insurance payment and cost of Boys Life for a year.

Our troop also sponsors one or two annual fundraising activities. A portion of this money goes to the troop and a portion goes to individual scout accounts. Scouts may use the money in their personal accounts to buy gear, attend summer camp or pay dues.

Summer Camp

- Summer camp is a great time to do rank advancement, earn merit badges and have lots of fun. We will be attending a very cool camp in Delaware called – Camp Henson (<http://tinyurl.com/camphenson>) in 2010. We have also attended Camp Powhatan in the Shenandoah. We are attending July 18, 2010. Cost for a week is generally in the \$315.00 range. Adult volunteers are welcome and encouraged for part or all of the week.

Yearly Activities

In November of each year, the troop leadership (scouts and adults) hold an offsite planning session and plan the entire year's activities – these calendars are available at the troop website (www.troop51bsa.us). Some of the activities include:

- Climbing/Rappelling
- Whitewater Rafting
- Backpacking
- Museum visits
- Sea Base
- Summer camp
- Multiple camping trips and hikes
- Service projects and Eagle projects
- Merit badge and advancement work

For the most part the calendar remains the same. There are changes throughout the year occasionally based on availability of volunteers, facilities, interests etc. The best place to stay current is by looking at the website periodically.

Equipment

Your son will need some basic equipment to get started and have fun. In general, cheap is good – these are boys and equipment will get broken, torn, burned, lost or any number of possibilities.

Before you buy – ask yourself two questions:

1. How heavy is each piece of equipment and how much does it all weigh together?
Generally speaking, a scout should not have a pack and equipment that is more than 40% of his body weight.
2. Considering the amount I am paying, if my son loses it or destroys it will I be really upset? If the answer to this question is yes...buy something else.

Here is what each scout (and maybe you) will need:

- **Good Hiking Boots** – Feet are very important when camping and hiking. If you are going to spend a lot of money, spend it here. Look for good arch support. Buy them so you can get two pairs of socks on comfortably. Two pair of socks when hiking dramatically cut down on blisters and keep feet warm. Your scout will be much happier when camping if they have the right item and fit. Make sure they are either waterproofed or buy waterproofing to put on. There is nothing worse on a campout than cold, wet feet.
- **Wool Hiking socks** – At least two pair, so they can be changed each day. Please note we are saying WOOL, **NOT** COTTON. Wool socks help keep feet warm even when wet. Synthetic socks are also acceptable, but cotton should be avoided. Ask for help at the store you go to for recommendations.
- **Good Backpack** - Lightweight is important – 3 ½ lbs to 5 ½ lbs. There are external frames or internal frames and either will do the trick for your son. It is more a matter of preference what you choose. An adjustable one might be in order depending on the torso height of your son. Both Kelty and Camptrails make good adjustable packs priced for less than \$100. REI and Dick's both carry these.
- **Two person tent** – These are good for “plop” camping. They can get expensive, so for most of the camping we do, look for a good three season tent. You may be able to find less expensive ones on sale. Look for good buys at www.campmor.com, www.sportsmans.com and www.cheaperthandirt.com . At some point your scout may want to purchase a backpacking tent which is extremely light and compact. The web sites listed above oftentimes have good buys on these.
- **Ground Cloth** – This is just a tarp of heavy plastic to go under the tent to protect it from water, sticks, rocks, dirt, etc. Do not over buy here. Measure the ground footprint of your tent and buy plastic to fit it. Tarps that are too large can actually add to the problem

Troop 51
Herndon, VA 20171

by allowing water to get underneath the tent. Blue tarps are available at Home Depot for \$4 to \$6.

- **Sleeping bag** – Several times a year we do cold weather camping. When you buy this item, get one that is rated down to 10 degrees or so. Your scout will thank you on those cold nights (not really, but they won't be uncomfortable). This is also a place to spend a little more money, assuming your scout will enjoy and continue camping for many years. One recent scoutmaster still uses his bag that is over 40 years old.
- **Ground Pad or lightweight mattress** - This is necessary to insulate you from the ground and make it more comfortable on those cold winter nights. Get one that folds or rolls up easily and tightly.
- **Eating utensils** - Lexan plate, spoon, fork and cup are good and nearly unbreakable. Beware of aluminum plates and bowls they conduct heat and can be hard to handle with hot food in them. A separate knife is not necessary, since each scout should be carrying a pocketknife with them shortly. Mark each of these items with the scout's initials in permanent ink. This way they can be identified after clean up.
- **Small pocket knife** - Before a scout can carry a pocketknife, they must pass the “**Totem Chip**” test. This is designed to teach them safety, proper use, care and handling of knives, axes and saws. We take this seriously and feel the carrying of a knife in Boy Scouting is a **privilege, not a right**. A small knife, no more than 3 inches closed or a small multi-tool is sufficient. You may also want to purchase a small sharpening stone to keep the knife sharp. It is also advised to purchase a knife with some sort of metal loop on it. This way you can attach the knife to a shoelace and tie it to scout pants. Then, when the knife gets dropped, it only goes as far as the shoelace allows.
- **Hydration pack, shatter resistant water bottle or canteen** - This is a critical item. Keeping properly hydrated on a scout activity is highly important. We recommend a hydration pack with room for a sandwich. Also, Nalgene bottles that can clip to a belt or backpack are very good and nearly indestructible.
- **Flashlight(s)** - They will lose this, so cheap and small is good. Two or more of them is also good. A small or medium flashlight such as a “Maglite” or one that fits around the scout's head as a headlamp is more than sufficient. Small flashlights also have the added benefits of being lighter, less expensive and not attracting as many bugs.
- **Whistle** – This is a safety device to carry on every campout. The louder, the better. If a scout becomes lost, or is in need of help, a whistle is one of the fastest and best ways to summon others. Put a shoelace around the whistle so it can be easily worn around the neck or tied to scout pants.
- **Rain gear** - Normal Troop 51 situations (it always rains on our campouts) require a rain suit of jacket and pants. This will keep the scout dryer and warmer than a poncho. This is another area where spending a little bit more money is probably worth it. Cold, wet scouts have historically been known to be UNHAPPY, cold, wet scouts. There are sometimes situations where a

Troop 51
Herndon, VA 20171

lightweight poncho is okay. These lightweight emergency ponchos can be purchased around \$1.00, buy a handful.

- **Small First Aid Kit** – Each scout can make their own. The Boy Scout Handbook has some great ideas and directions. If the scouts make their own, they will know what they have available if a need arises.
- **Compass** – There are several types of compasses. Expensive does not always translate to best. This is another item that can get lost easily. Make sure it has some way to attach a shoelace or lanyard to secure it to scout pants, a backpack, or carried around the neck.
- **Zip Lock bags** - For packing clothes and other important items, like Scout Handbooks, because it does rain.
- **“CAMP DRY”** – This is water proofing spray, available at Kmart or Target. Use this on tents and boots.

Your son will get a 10% discount off camping gear at Dick’s Sporting Goods with his Scout Registration Card.

Our Website

www.troop51bsa.us - The most important site to visit. It has our calendar, other important information and links to the sites below. It is constantly updated and is a very useful tool.

Websites to help:

www.macscouter.com - Everything Boy Scouting, this is not an official site.

www.campmor.com - Good sales on camping / outdoor gear

www.cheaperthandirt.com – Very reasonably priced camping gear

www.sportsmansguide.com - Another source of reasonably priced camping gear

www.boyscouts-ncac.org/district/powhatan - The National Capital Area official website for the Powhatan District, of which we belong.

Troop Mailing List:

To subscribe send a blank message to: Troop-51-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

You can send a message to the entire troop by e-mailing to: Troop-51@yahoogroups.com

Troop 51
Herndon, VA 20171

This is a suggested Camping checklist. **Each scout is responsible for themselves and their gear.** If they fail to bring something, the adults on the campout will ensure there are no life threatening consequences. However if, for example, a flashlight is lost or forgotten, their tent will be pretty dark at night. This is not a punishment, it is a lesson learned for the next campout.

Camping/Hiking Checklist

<u>The 10</u>	<u>Camp Gear</u>	<u>Personal Gear</u>	<u>Cooking</u>
<u>Essentials</u>			
First Aid Kit	Sleeping Bag	T-Shirt(not cotton)	
Band-Aids	Sleeping Pad	Sweatshirt	
Antibacterial		Underwear	Cup
Mole Skin	Ground Cloth	Wool socks	Plate
	Tent	Warm Coat	Fork
Whistle	Tent Poles		Spoon
	Tent Stakes	Soap	
Compass		Toothbrush	
	Rope (50') or Parachute cord	Toothpaste	
Sunscreen & Insect Repellent			
		Small Towel	
Knife			
		Hat	
Canteen/Water Bottle			
		Toilet Paper	
Rain Gear/poncho			
		Hiking Stick	
Flashlight/Batteries			
		Medication	
Trail Food			
Matches			