

Troop 355

SAN MARINO, CALIFORNIA
Spring 2009

Dear New Scout and Parents,

Welcome to Troop 355!! We are excited to have you as new members of our Troop. The information contained in this notebook will help you get familiar with the workings of our Troop.

1. Registration

By now you should have received all of the registration materials. Here is list of documents that need to be returned to our Registrar, Ann Boutin.

- A. Parent Consent Form
This should be completed, signed and dated. No scout may participate in any activity without a completed consent form.
- B. Boy Scout Application
This should also be completed and returned to the Registrar.
- C. Volunteer Leader Application
Troop 355 relies on parent participation. Please complete the application and return to the Registrar. Without a dedicated effort by our parents, Troop 355 cannot operate effectively. You will be asked at some time to head a committee, coordinate a camping trip, or coordinate another activity (Court of Honor, Service Project, participate as an adult leader on a camping trip, etc.) With your help, the operation of Troop 355 will be much smoother and your son's experience enhanced.

2. Uniforms

You should purchase an official "Class A" Boy Scout uniform including:

- A. Scout shirt with the American Flag
- B. Scout pants and/or shorts
- C. Scout belt
- D. Scout Merit Badge Sash (large, as boys do grow!)

A brand new scout shirt will soon be adorned with several patches that need to be sewn on in the approved spots. In this notebook you will find a BSA document entitled "Official Placement of Insignia Guide". These pages are designed to help you figure out where all the uniform patches go. When in doubt, asks a senior scout, a parent, or the staff up at the Smiser Scout Shop located at 340 E. Sierra Madre Blvd. Pasadena (626) 351-8815

3. The Scout Handbook

The Boy Scout Handbook is the official guide to Boy Scouting. Soon it will become your personal record of achievement in scouting. Each scout must have one. They can be purchased from the Smiser Scout Shop. Buy a black cover with a Velcro closure to protect it. Do not lose your scout book! It is recommended that you periodically scan and save the rank advancement pages in case the book is lost.

4. Troop Web Site & Yahoo Groups Communication

Troop 355's website is www.bsa-troop355.org. The site is maintained by the combined efforts of the Troop historian, the committee members and the scoutmasters. It contains announcements, our calendar, photos of past events, rosters and lots of resource information and several scouting forms available for down loading. Please add this site to your favorites and check it often.

The troop also uses Yahoo Groups for email communication purposes. It is very important that you have at least one current email registered with the troop. If your email changes, please notify the Committee Chair with your change. As a member of our Troop you will be included in our Yahoo Group and you will be able to send and receive emails blasted to the entire group. Please do not send emails via Yahoo Groups for anything other than communications that are important for the entire troop to receive and only with the permission of the Committee Chair or the Scoutmaster

5. Troop Calendar

The calendar is the corner stone of our web site and is updated almost daily. There is always something new! It's a good policy to check the website weekly to stay current with the Troop activities.

6. Parental Involvement

By any measure, Troop 355 is one of the premier Boy Scout Troops in Southern California due in large part to opportunities we provide our scouts and the dedication of our parents. We are one of the largest troops in the area with approximately 150 registered scouts. **As a volunteer organization our continued success is truly dependent upon the involvement of each and every parent.**

Your participation in your son's Troop is critical to his success in scouting. Furthermore, your involvement is essential to the continued success of Troop 355 and is expected. You should plan on attending several father/son campouts, organizing a merit badge class, attending semi-monthly Troop meetings and/or serving on a few Boards of Review. For example, two or three times a year you will be scheduled to participate on one of our monthly Boards of Review to determine whether a scout is qualified to advance in rank. We will give you plenty of notice and provide you with the criteria for making these determinations. It will expose you to the process of rank advancement, as well as provide you with further insight on how best to assist your own son in achieving his goals in

scouting. Through your commitment to Troop 355, you will find each of these shared experiences to be both exciting and rewarding to all parties involved.

7. Troop Meetings

Troop meetings are held twice a month on Mondays from 7:30 – 8:30 p.m. at the Lacy Park Scout House. Scouts are expected to be in full Class A uniform – neckerchief, shirt, pants, belt and socks at these meetings. Meetings typically include Troop business, skills workshop, presentation of rank advancement and merit badge awards and team-building exercises. Occasionally we have a guest speaker (paramedics, police officers, pilots, doctors etc.). We do our best to work around school and other community events, but there will be conflicts from time to time.

8. Troop Roster

Several times a year we publish the Troop roster. The roster will be sent to you electronically through Yahoo Groups. Please check your information and let us know if we've made any errors.

9. Patrol Roster

Our troop is divided into patrols of about ten boys each. Troop 355 utilizes the patrol method of scouting. Patrols are established by age group and will, for the most part, stay intact throughout your career in scouting. Each patrol is led by a scout who is appointed to the patrol leader position by the scoutmaster and will serve in that capacity for about six months until the scoutmaster selects his replacement. The patrol leader is responsible for building and maintaining the teamwork of his patrol. The Patrol leader reports to the senior patrol leader also appointed by the scoutmaster. An assistant scoutmaster monitors the activities of each patrol. A Troop Guide will assist new scout patrols. A Troop Guide is a senior scout who will help the new patrol get organized and familiar with the workings of the troop.

10. Parent Leadership Roster

In this notebook you will find a list of Adult leaders. These are the parents who are currently instrumental in making Troop 355's program so effective.

11. Campouts

Campouts provide an opportunity for Scouts to experience something new, face fresh challenges and try out their new scout skills. Campouts teach Scouts how to work together with other Scouts and their dads away from the usual routine. Sharing those experiences help scouts and dads get through other challenges they may face in the future and will give both of you some great memories.

We want to encourage dads to attend the campouts and outings with their sons, but we understand that from time to time this may not be possible. While the Troop is not a child

care service, we will allow a Scout to attend a campout or outing without his dad if the following arrangements are made in advance:

- A. Arrange with another adult who will be attending the outing to agree to supervise and be responsible for your scout.
- B. Talk to the adult who is running the outing and let them know who has agreed to be responsible for your scout and get his approval of the arrangement.

12. Merit Badges

Merit Badges are awarded to scouts who have completed a list of tasks prescribed by the BSA in a specific subject area. Each merit badge is an opportunity for a scout to learn about the subject matter and learn how to complete a project. Some of the Merit Badges are quite difficult and cover subjects that represent the core of BSA values. These dozen or so "Eagle required" Merit badges are prerequisites to senior rank advancement. An Eagle Scout candidate must complete them. Information on Merit Badges can be found at www.meritbadge.com.

13. Rank Advancement

There are six ranks of achievement in scouting; Tenderfoot, Second Class, First Class, Star, Life and Eagle. In this notebook you will find a copy of the Troops rank advancement policy. These procedures are designed to build your skill and confidence while insuring that each scout has mastered the required skills for each rank.

14. Record Keeping

Your scout handbook is the primary record of your accomplishments in scouting. The Troop tracks merit badges and rank advancement and forwards that information to the San Gabriel Valley District headquarters. Nevertheless it is strongly recommended that you keep your own records of your scouting accomplishments in a three ring binder of your own. This binder should include:

- A. Rank advancement – keep a log of the date that each advancement is earned and store the receipts that come with the rank patches in plastic sheets typically used to store baseball cards
- B. Merit Badges - keep a log of the date that each Merit Badge is earned and store the receipts that come with the Merit Badges in plastic sheets typically used to store baseball cards
- C. Camping – keep a log of each campout that you attended that includes where you went and how many nights you camped
- D. Community service – keep a log that includes what you did, where you were and how many hours of service were involved.
- E. Leadership – keep a log of all of your leadership assignments including the dates

your assignments was issued and the date it was completed.

15. Advisory Committee meetings

Advisory Committee meetings are held once monthly from 7:30 – 8:30 p.m. at the Scout House. Parents are strongly urged to attend. These meetings are very important and cover Troop finances, upcoming events, current business and any issues that require our attention. Your participation ensures a strong and vital Troop program.

16. Dues

New scout (for those starting in Spring) dues are \$100.00 and cover the balance of the Scout Year. Regular annual dues are \$250, collected in September for the following calendar year (January thru December). Dues for families with more than one scout are an additional \$150 per scout. Our dues cover individual annual scout registration fees, *Boy's Life* magazine for each scout and our annual tax-deductible donation of (typically) \$100 per family. Dues also cover the wide range of troop expenses (recruiting, awards, Scout House maintenance at \$50 per family, etc.) and many, but not all, State and National Park entrance fees. Food costs on outings are shared between the members of the patrol.

It is important that dues for the full year are received by October 15, 2007. After October 15 dues are increased by \$100 per scout. Only scouts whose dues are current will be able to participate in troop outings and advancement activities. (We have undertaken this policy to ensure that Troop registration is complete in time to facilitate our chartering with the BSA.)

17. The Scout Outdoor Essentials (The Ten Essentials)

The Scout Outdoor essentials listed below are the basic tools and supplies every scout should carry on any outdoor outing. Many scouts keep their ten essentials in an old backpack, or fanny pack ready for any outing. They often make a pleasant journey even better. In an emergency, they could even help you save a life.

1. Pocket Knife – A pocket knife is the most useful tool a scout can own. Keep it clean and sharp.
2. First Aid Kit – In addition to the complete first aid kit carried by your patrol, bring along your own first aid supplies to treat minor injuries. Include the following: moleskin for blisters, a few Band-Aids, a small roll of adhesive tape, several gauze pads, enough change for an emergency call, a whistle for emergency signaling, and a large gauze compress to stop severe bleeding.
3. Extra Clothing – Getting chilled during an outing can be miserable and sometimes dangerous. Carry a wool shirt or windbreaker, a stocking cap and mittens for cool weather wear. On colder days, add a jacket or parka. You won't need as much warm clothing in hot weather but you should always be equipped for a surprise storm or cool evening winds.

4. Rain Gear – A raincoat or poncho will shield you from showers and storms. In warm weather or in any emergency you can turn a plastic trash bag into a poncho by cutting holes in it for your head and arms.
5. Canteen or water bottle – A 1-quart canteen or plastic water bottle will get you from one water source to the next. Add a second container in hot weather.
6. Flashlight – Finding your way down a trail in the dark is tough without a flashlight. A sturdy flashlight that uses a couple of AA batteries doesn't weigh much and gives out a strong beam.
7. Trail Food – Your body burns a lot of energy during outdoor adventures. Trail mix, nuts and raisins and granola bars are good sources of energy.
8. Matches and fire starters – Wooden strike-anywhere matches can be made waterproof by painting them with clear fingernail polish or dipping them in melted paraffin or you can carry untreated matches in a waterproof container found at any sporting goods store.
9. Sun Protection –Overexposure to the sun can be very dangerous. Always carry a hat, sunscreen (30 SPF or higher), Chap Stick and UV rated sunglasses.
10. Map and Compass – A compass and map are essentials whenever you travel in unfamiliar territory. Topographical maps are readily available at Sports Chalet as are good quality compasses.

18. Scouting and Sports

We believe there is room for Scouting and Sports. Most of the boys in our Troop participate in several sports. In fact many of our boys go on to play Varsity Sports in High School. However, it is important to keep both activities in balance. Two missed practices a month and one weekend camp-out should not adversely hurt a boy's or his team's performance. Just give your coach the advance notice he needs to plan ahead.

A terrific camping trip, a memorable meeting or earning a rank advancement will be remembered long after a particular sport victory. We hope you will work hard to balance your sports and scouting activities.

19. Conclusion

We hope this introduction has been helpful. Please keep it nearby for reference. Again, we are very excited to have you as part of Troop 355.

Sincerely,

Dave Link
Scoutmaster '08 -'09

Brian Snear
Scoutmaster '09-'10