

WELCOME TO BOY SCOUT TROOP 624

“WHERE THE ADVENTURE BEGINS!”



ST. ANN PARISH, ARLINGTON, VA

“Lead, follow or get out of the way!”

www.troop624.org

Boy Scout Troop 624
St. Ann Parish, Arlington, VA

Dear Scouting Parent,

The members of Troop 624 extend you and your son a hearty welcome! We think Troop 624 is just about the best Boy Scout Troop in the National Capitol Area Council and we're glad you selected us for your Scouting adventure.

As of February 2008, Troop 624 has 46 registered scouts. But Troop 624 doesn't want to be the largest Boy Scout troop in Chain Bridge District. Rather, our adult leadership aims to focus on the individual scout in order to help develop character and leadership qualities through application of the aims and methods of scouting formulated by Robert Baden-Powell ("B-P") nearly a century ago.

We have prepared this **booklet to tell you about our troop** and help answer some of the many questions most new Scout families have when they join Troop 624. You can find more information about us on our Troop website, **www.troop624.org**.

You will also learn about the Troop Leader's and their roles and you can decide what role you want to play in the troop's program. There are plenty of activities for everyone!

We also want you to know what **your responsibilities** are as a new family member of our troop and what the **troop program** will do for your Scout(s). We expect every family to take an active role in the troop program and make it more fun in doing so.

Where and When We Meet

Troop meetings are every Tuesday night at 7:30 p.m. in St. Ann's Church (10th St. entrance). Troop Committee meetings are called every few months as needed but Committee business can also be conducted in Room 108 on troop meeting nights.

Getting Started

First, register your Scout with the troop so the National Capital Area Council of the Boy Scouts of America will officially recognize his progress. To do this you need to pay the registration fee of \$21.00 which includes \$9.00 for a subscription to *Boy's Life* and also includes insurance – make checks payable to BSA Troop 624. Also sign (and ask your son to sign) and return the Code of Conduct (attached as the last page of this packet).

Second, register yourself as a member of the Troop Committee. The cost is \$11.00 for adults.

Third, purchase a uniform for your Scout. You might ask other Scouts for out-grown uniform shirts and pants rather than buy new ones. Uniforms can be purchased at various Scout Service Centers in Bethesda at the Council Office or the Scout Shop in Ravenswood Shopping Center at I-495 and Braddock Road. Also Casual Adventure has a limited Scout Shop on Washington Blvd. And start a Scout Box for your Scout to keep his merit badge cards and other official information. They will be important as he approaches Eagle.

Fourth, sign your Scout up for summer camp.

Fifth, attend the next Troop Committee meeting and sign-up for a troop job to support us.

If after reading this booklet you have additional questions, don't hesitate to contact the Scoutmaster Staff or Troop Committee.

We hope you will enjoy Troop 624 and will become an active participant.

Yours in Scouting,

Troop 624 Committee

GENERAL INFORMATION

HOW WE DO THINGS

Troop 624 was **chartered** in September 1949 by St. Ann Parish in full compliance with all of the requirements set forth by the Boy Scouts of America, a Congressional corporation, established in 1910. The troop is located in the Chain Bridge District of the National Capital Area Council and has been serving the Arlington Community for half a century. To date, the troop has generated 73 Eagle Scouts. The troop maintains an excellent working relationship with the parish through the good work of the Chartering Organization Representative, Pastor Donald Greenhag, who monitors the Committee's work.

The guiding precepts of the troop are the **Boy Scout Oath, Law, Motto and Slogan**. Each Scout is expected to live by the standards. Each Scout learns these early in his advancement and is expected to be able to articulate them at any time when asked and definitely at each Board of Review in his advancement.

One of the ultimate **aims of the Boy Scouts of America** is to provide quality leadership for our nation. Therefore, Troop 624 is a "boy run" troop – meaning that the Patrol Leaders' Council (which is comprised of Scouts elected by their fellow Scouts into positions of responsibility) runs the troop and makes all important decisions. This means that the lessons learned by the Scouts through their advancement, working together in patrols and community service is intended to prepare them for their roles as America's leaders in years to come.

We try to base all troop operations on the concept that **the Scouts run the troop**. This is done using the **patrol method**, which is a group of 6 to 8 Scouts, led by the Patrol Leader and his assistant. New Scouts are assigned to a "new Scout" patrol until Summer Camp where they are then assigned to one of the regular patrols. That gives them an opportunity to get some initial orientation and advancement prior to camp. Together they do what is necessary on outings and in meetings to enliven the program. The **Patrol Leaders Council** is comprised of the Senior Patrol Leader, Assistant Senior Patrol Leader, Troop Guide and Patrol Leaders. Together with the Scoutmaster in attendance they establish the program for the troop. The enrolled Scouts elect all officers of the troop annually. The Senior Patrol Leader is elected with the concurrence of the Scoutmaster.

Adult leaders are confirmed by the **Troop Committee**. The leaders include the **Scoutmaster Staff** comprised of the Scoutmaster and the Assistant Scoutmasters. Additionally, the Troop Committee is made up of registered parents and other interested adults. All must be registered with the Boy Scouts of America. The Scoutmaster Staff is responsible for seeing that the troop operates smoothly on a daily basis. The Troop Committee ensures the permanency of the troop. Working closely with the Scoutmaster Staff, it is responsible for ensuring adherence to the official Boy Scout Program, overseeing operations, supporting the Scoutmaster Staff, supporting the annual program, maintaining financial integrity, conducting the Boards of Review and resolving any difficulties that may surface.

Troop 624's adult leadership is dedicated to the scouting program. All are BSA trained – and some have completed the BSA's advanced Wood Badge adult leadership training. Each loves Scouting and brings a special talent or two to the troop. Many are Eagle Scouts. Most have extensive experienced in outdoor skills such as camping, backpacking and hiking. All are dedicated to the personal growth of individual scouts, and to accomplishing the aims of scouting through application of the eight scouting methods.

Virtus Training

It is the policy of the Diocese of Arlington as well as the Catholic Church in America, that all adults working with Diocesan youth are trained in the Virtus Child Protection Program. Details about this program are available from the Troop Committee.

ADVANCEMENT

Advancement is an important component of Scouting. It is through advancement that Scouts learn the lessons they need to prepare them to take their places as adults in American society. The advancement program (as well as the overall program) in the Boy Scouts of America is established by the National Headquarters in Irving, Texas and implemented throughout the United States by Boy Scout Councils and Districts. The ranks of Scouting include Scout, Tenderfoot, Second Class, First Class, Star, Life and Eagle. Each rank has specific requirements and elective activities that each Scout must successfully perform to advance. The advancement lessons are taught and evaluated by senior Scouts, the Scoutmaster Staff and Merit Badge Counselors.

As each Scout advances he must participate in some form of **community service**, he must be active in the troop, and he must demonstrate that he has **“good Scout Spirit”** – i.e., that he lives by the Scout Oath, Law, Motto and Slogan. It is not enough to simply pass the requirements for each rank. Each Scout must understand that he is responsible for demonstrating good Scout Spirit. This is determined during the Scoutmaster’s Conference, which is a private interview held with the Scoutmaster or one of his Assistants at one of the troop meetings.

Additionally, each Scout seeking promotion to First Class receives a practical test from senior Scouts on his Scout skills as a means for checking his retention of those he learned in the subordinate ranks.

After the Scoutmaster has had his conference with the advancement candidate and has determined that he is ready to be presented to the **Board of Review**, he asks the Chairman of Advancement for the troop to convene the Board. It is comprised of at least three Troop Committee members. The purpose of the Board is to ensure that the candidate for each rank, except Eagle, has successfully mastered the requirements for that rank.

Please note that Troop 624 places **special emphasis on first aid** because good working knowledge of these skills can save a life, and this is also an area where someone could be seriously hurt if the Scouts do not know the skills well. First aid questions will be asked on every Board of Review and Scouts are expected to be able to respond to them accurately.

The candidate Eagle Scouts must sit before the **National Board of Review** and they receive their rank through the National Court of Honor. The Troop Committee convenes the National Board of Review, however a representative of the Chain Bridge District Advancement Committee also participates due to the importance of the award. Only 1.5% of all Scouts ever achieve the rank of Eagle Scout.

After a candidate for advancement successfully proves himself worthy of his promotion to the satisfaction of the Troop Committee, he and his fellow Scouts receive their awards in an advancement ceremony known as the **Court of Honor**. Troop 624 usually has two such events each year – one (usually in June and includes a pizza dinner) before Scout Camp and the other (including a pot luck dinner) in September or October in conjunction with our anniversary celebration of the troop’s founding. It is quite a festive occasion and all families and friends are invited to attend and witness our Scouts’ accomplishments.

WHAT WE DO

Troop 624 is a very active troop! In addition to our regularly scheduled meetings, we have many outings each year. There are two reasons for this activity. First, is to have fun – everything we do in the troop is designed to have fun as well as to learn. Second, Robert Stevenson Smythe Baden-Powell, Lord of Gilwell, the founder of Scouting, designed the program around the out-of-doors. He felt that boys benefited from learning woodland skills and experiencing all that nature has to offer.

Some of our activities are District or Council events and some are troop events. Several happen at the same time each year or, at least, in the same month. Others occur based on the decisions of the Patrol Leaders Council representing the enrolled Scouts. The following is a list of some of the activities we do each year and when they usually occur (more information is available on our troop website).

Camporee and Projectoree

These are competition camping events where patrols from many troops compete with each other in specific skill areas such as pioneering, orienteering, camping, and the like. It occurs in the fall around October. The Projectoree occurs in April. These are District events. Troop 624 always participates in Chain Bridge District's Fall Camporee which in the past has had exciting themes such as Mountain Man Rendezvous, Emergency Preparedness, and Orienteering. The Troop also attends the Spring Projectoree which emphasizes patrol competition.

Kondike Derby

In January the troop participates in the Klondike Derby at Camp Highroad near Aldie, VA – our patrols build sleds and spent a fun-filled day in interpatrol competition of first aid, building shelters, lashing, fire building, etc..

Outdoor Program

Troop 624 has some type of an outing nearly every month. Sometimes it's a backpacking trip or a wilderness survival campout. Other times it is a ski trip or white water rafting. These events are decided upon, planned and organized by the Patrol Leaders' Council. Troop 624 is also associated with a venturing crew that offers **high-adventure opportunities** for older Scouts. The high-adventure program includes Philmont Scout Reservation in Cimarron, NM, Len Hok Sin Trail in Goshen, VA, Sea Camp in Florida and the Northern Tier in Minnesota.

Summer Camp

Each year, during the week of the July 4, the troop goes to **Sinoquipe** (pronounced sin-oh-qwippee) which is an Algonquin word for "builder of men". We attend camp for three reasons: (1) to commemorate Lord Baden-Powell's initial camp during which he tested his fledgling Scouting program at Brown Sea Isle; (2) to have fun; and, (3) for advancement. Troop 624 traditionally wins all of the Sinoquipe honors during its week at camp. Summer camp costs \$240 for each Scout and \$40 for each accompanying adult leader. All new Scouts are encouraged to go to camp during their first summer after joining the troop. The week gives them the opportunity to advance from Scout to Tenderfoot or Second Class and gets them off to a super beginning in their Scouting adventure.

The Troop established the **Downs Fund** as a camp scholarship fund in remembrance of Jim Downs, who died while serving as our Chairman of Finance. His sons, Mark and Brian Downs, are Troop 624 Eagles. If your Scout needs a campership to attend Sinoquipe, please do not hesitate to contact the Scoutmaster or Troop Committee Chairman. If you would like to donate to the fund to help provide camperships, we welcome the donation as well.

The National Good Turn

The Scout Motto is *Do a good turn daily*. Each year in early November Troop 624 Scouts join over 2,000,000 brother Scouts across America in collecting non-perishable foodstuffs for the needy. The National Capital Area Council has been a leader in that activity. As the largest Boy Scout Council in America, it is only reasonable that NCAC troops lead the way in the National Good Turn and Troop 624 is right out front in that effort!

Troop Day, Our Anniversary

Troop 624 was first chartered in 1949! In September we celebrate this anniversary with a big dinner and reunion for former troop members and especially our 73 Eagle Scouts. You will receive more information, as it becomes available.

The Annual Pancake Breakfast

Each year, the Troop 624 holds its pancake breakfast. This is a major fund-raiser for the troop and is held in the Parish Hall. Together with Cub Pack 624, the Scouts sell tickets to the breakfast, greet and serve the participants and clean up afterwards. The adult leaders handle the cooking. It's a wonderful time with lots of good food!

Fundraisers

Operating Troop 624 costs money! So the Troop Committee has been working to expand our fundraising activities. We have two major fundraisers, our annual mulch sale and the popcorn sales. Each patrol has been responsible for selling their allotment of popcorn products. The troop maintains "Scout accounts" to credit individual Scouts with their fundraising work. The money in the accounts can be used for summer camp or other scout-related expenditures.

Other Events

Throughout the year the troop participates in other events. We do a lot of hiking and camping. Sometimes we take field trips to monuments, civic buildings, King's Dominion and other places. Our Scouts even laid a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknowns! In 2002 we lashed together a 15-foot high hourglass tower at Scouting on the Mall and launched water balloons at the gathered crowds below. These activities are planned by the Patrol Leaders Council with support from the Scoutmaster Staff and the Troop Committee. If you have an idea for a fun trip or outing be sure to bring it up!

COMMUNICATIONS

As Troop 624 grows, communications becomes a more pressing issue. There are several means of communicating. Almost all of the families in the troop have **email** and we send out announcements regularly using this medium. We also keep folks informed via our website, www.troop624.org. Additionally, troop meetings and Troop Committee meetings are often venues for communication. At any time, a parent or Scout may contact any other member of the troop, Scoutmaster Staff or Troop Committee by such means as he or she deems appropriate. Troop 624 encourages free and open communication about any topic or concern involving our Scouts or program. It is our mutual goal to develop and implement the best Scouting program possible for our Scouts and to ensure that they fully enjoy and benefit from their Scouting experience. Besides being an important leadership skill, good communications is key to achieving that goal.

STANDARDS AND EXPECTATIONS FOR TROOP 624

Scouts in Troop 624 live by the Scout Oath, Law, Motto and Slogan. Sometimes the meaning of these principles can become somewhat blurred or confused. For that reason, the following standards and expectations are offered for clarification.

DRESS CODE

There are three standard uniforms or dress standards for the troop. All badges, rank insignia and leadership patches should be current.

Class A Uniform: This is the full dress uniform with merit badge sash, Order of the Arrow sash (for OA members), authorized hat, Scout Shirt (short or long sleeve), Scout pants, troop neckerchief and slide, Scout belt or equivalent, socks and shoes. The Class A uniform (usually minus the sashes) is worn to troop meetings, Boards of Review, Courts of Honor, Scout Sunday and other special occasions.

Class B Uniform: This uniform consists of a scout shirt and authorized hat. Scout pants and neckerchief are not normally required. This uniform is worn on hikes and backpacks or in transport to Summer Camp or other outings where a Class A uniform is not needed.

Work Uniform: This uniform consists of the troop tee-shirt, blue jeans or work pants in good condition, tennis shoes and outer wear appropriate for the season.

ATTENDANCE

Advancement to each rank requires that a Scout “be active in his troop” for a specified period of time. With all of the activities that young men participate in these days, it is necessary to define what attendance means in Troop 624. We encourage every Scout to maintain a 66% or better attendance average for the previous six-month period before advancing to the next rank. We do not keep formal records; rather “being active” is determined by the Scoutmaster and his staff. Each Scout must also maintain contact with his Patrol Leader or Senior Patrol Leader or Scoutmaster or Assistant Scoutmaster (which ever is appropriate given the Scout’s position in the troop) keeping them informed of absences prior to their occurrence. Schedules do conflict from time to time and it is expected that Scouts will sometimes miss a Troop Meeting. However, the following special events are considered very important and attendance is required unless special arrangements are made with the Scoutmaster: Camporees, the National Good Turn, fundraising events, Courts of Honor, National Courts of Honor, Scout Sunday, the Pancake Breakfast and summer camp (always the week in which the Fourth of July falls).

CODE OF CONDUCT

Our code of conduct is posted on our website and is part of this package. It is important that every scout adheres to it. Please ask your son to read and sign it. Parents should read and sign it too and then return it to us with the scout registration form.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

Troop 624 has a very active program. We need all of the adult leadership help we can get. At least one parent from each Scout’s family is expected to register as an adult leader – a Scouter – and serve on the Troop Committee or Scoutmaster Staff. We recognize that not all parents have Scouting experience, but

we also know that each parent has a skill to contribute. We need Merit Badge Counselors, Assistant Scoutmasters, drivers, hikers, campers, summer camp staff, fund-raisers, recordkeepers, “badge-picker-uppers” – there is plenty of activity for everyone. Please be ready to indicate how you wish to participate in the troop when you register.

There are many other ways that parents can help support the Troop and our program. Here are a few ideas:

- 1) sign up as an adult leader -- we need to have you sign up to be sure we are covered by the Council's insurance program, forms are available from the Scoutmaster or Troop Committee Chairman
- 2) attend Troop Committee meetings (usually announced a week beforehand – we need your input and participation).
- 3) come to our troop meetings when you can, especially the Courts of Honor -- show the Scouts we're proud of their accomplishments
- 4) attend the Eagle Courts of Honor – these are very special events as only 1.5% of all Scouts become Eagles
- 5) join us for a few days at Camp Sinoquipe during the week of July 4th -- we like to have as many parents as possible camp with us for a portion of the week to help those Scouters who are there all week
- 6) pick a program month or event to help with our activities by going on the outing or providing transportation or other adult support
- 7) become a Merit Badge Counselor in a topic you enjoy, serve on the Troop Committee or on the Scout Master staff or in a special role such as Equipment Chairman, Advancement Chairman, etc.
- 8) encourage your Scout to work on his advancement and let him know you are interested in his accomplishments – it is through advancement that the Scout benefits most from the program because the advancement opens him to new experiences and adventures.
- 9) contribute to the Downs Fund. The Fund helps us maintain our equipment and provides camping scholarships. Contributions can be sent to Sharon Cunningham, Finance Chairman, 6552 Orland Street, Falls Church, VA 22043.
- 10) sign up to help the Troop in its fund-raisers such as the Pancake Breakfast ticket sales, popcorn sales, or other moneymakers.

At any time during the year if you have any questions about Troop 624 plans or operations, please feel free to contact anyone on the Scoutmaster Staff or Troop Committee identified on the Troop Roster.

TROOP 624 CODE OF CONDUCT

All Scouts in Troop 624 are responsible for living up to the Scout Oath, Law, Motto and Slogan. The following Code of Conduct has been adopted by the Troop Committee and **must be signed by each Scout and parent and returned to the Committee** upon initial registration. Any situation that is not covered below will be decided by the present Scoutmaster Staff or Troop Committee and discussed with the parent and Scout.

1. A Scout will take care of all troop or patrol gear issued to him or his patrol and any personal property belonging to others. A Scout will be responsible for all negligent damage he causes.
2. Printed material or pictures which a Scout would not want his parents to see is not acceptable and will not be brought to troop or patrol meetings or on troop campouts or other activities.
3. Fighting with or striking another Scout is not acceptable under any circumstances. Hazing of new Scouts is not permitted.
4. Engaging in unsafe acts is not acceptable. Unsafe acts include improper use of knives or axes, sharp sticks, ropes or other materials, the use of fireworks of any type, and other activities as proscribed by the *Guide to Safe Scouting*.
5. Using language that a Scout would not use in front of his parents is not permitted.
6. Scouts will maintain a positive attitude and remember that “cheerful” is the eighth Scout Law.
7. Any Scout who has a problem with another Scout or an adult leader will immediately inform two adult leaders of the problem and seek a solution.
8. When instructed, Scouts will utilize the “buddy system” on troop outings.
9. Scouts will always maintain the “Rule of Three” -- individual Scouts will not be alone with an adult leader to which he is not related but will always seek to be in the presence of a second adult leader or Scout. For example, two Scouts should work on a merit badge at the same time with a counselor.
10. Scouts will only use pocket knives (having completed their Totin’ Chip requirements) – no hunting knives, switchblades, gravity knives, sheath knives or butterfly knives will be permitted.
11. Scouts are not permitted to have in their possession any radios, cell phones, electronic music or game devices or playing cards. When the troop goes on an outing it is expected that Scouts will focus on the theme of that outing.
12. Scouts who indicated they would be going on an outing but change their minds and do not inform the Scoutmaster staff that they cannot go for whatever reason within two days before the beginning of the outing must share in the cost of the food and other troop expenses incurred.
13. The Scoutmaster Staff will determine if a Scout’s conduct requires his removal from or prevents his participation in a Scout outing. When this occurs the parents will remove the Scout as soon as possible from the situation.

Any parent who believes his or her Scout was treated unfairly should contact the Scoutmaster Staff or Troop Committee to discuss and reconcile it.

Scout’s Signature

Date

Parent’s Signature(s)

Date

Troop 624 Parental Involvement/Interest Form

To Troop 624: Yes, I'm interested in helping out with troop activities! Here's some information about me to help you know and use available resources!

My Name: _____ Spouse's Name: _____

Phone: Home _____ Work _____ Other: _____

Email addresses: _____

My occupation _____ Spouse's Occupation: _____

My Hobbies and Interests

Spouse's Hobbies and Interests:

Scouting Experience: _____

Camping/Outdoors Experience: _____

Military or other Leadership Experience: _____

Fundraising Experience _____

Volunteer Experience _____

Ages & names of other children _____

Scout Merit Badges I'd like to counsel: _____

Other areas of interest: _____

PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN TO TED KNIGHT TROOP COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN