



# Boy Scout Troop 76

Ridgefield, Connecticut

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Please note that in the interests of security for our Scouts, by policy we do not post Scout's full names nor any details about the location of our activities.

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December 28, 2002

Dear Scout Parent,

I hope you are enjoying the holiday season! Another year is nearly upon us and it is time to reflect upon the events of this past year and get on with the planning for those ahead. The addition of eighteen new Scouts to the Troop earlier this year has provided us with much needed growth and brought renewed enthusiasm to the Troop. These Scouts have already attended several campouts, participated in service projects, and are hard at work on rank advancement. Congratulations to Stephen R. and Alex D. for becoming the first of the new Scouts to attain the rank of First Class! It is the aim of the Boy Scouting program for all new Scouts to earn this rank within their first year of Scouting. Stephen and Alex earned it in just eight months! Many more of our new Scouts are very close behind. Many of these Scouts would be advancing more slowly if it were not for the efforts of our new Scout Patrol Leaders, Neil D., Brandon Z., and Michael R. and many other older Scouts. Great job guys!

Our Troop's Scouting year is divided into two leadership terms. The first term running from January 1 to May 31 and the second from June 1 to December 31. For advancement to the rank of Star, Life, and Eagle a Scout is required to "serve in a position of responsibility", in one of several required leadership positions, for a period of up to six months. Near the end of each term we conduct Patrol Leader elections in which each Scout is given the opportunity to vote for the next term's Patrol Leaders. New Scouts will not vote in the first election as they will be continuing in their original Patrols for the first year. Other approved leadership positions, i.e., Quartermaster, Chaplain's Aide, etc., are awarded to those Scouts that demonstrate a need and an ability to adequately fulfill the position.

This year has also seen the addition of two new Eagle Scouts to the Troop. Congratulations to Craig M. and Matthew V. W.! Much of their success in the final leg of this long journey is owed to guidance of their Eagle Advisor, Vincent Giordano.

It was my privilege to accompany eight Troop 76 Scouts to Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico this year. At Philmont Scouts embark on a ten day, high adventure backpacking trip through the Sangre de Cristo mountains and participate in various Scouting programs at staffed camps along the way. There are already eight more Scouts signed up for a trip to Philmont again this Summer and openings are available for two more Scouts. Scouts must be fourteen years of age as of January 1, 2003, and meet specific health requirements to attend. Adults Joe McGowan and Tony Witek will accompany the Scouts.

Thank you to all our Scouts for your participation in our annual Wreath Sales this year. I know this is a big effort at a tough time of year and we really do appreciate the effort of all that helped out. Again on behalf of the Troop, I must offer my sincerest thanks for the tireless efforts of our Wreath Sales chairpersons, Susan and Joseph McGowan. This is their third and final year of managing our fundraiser. Susan and Joe, along with assistants Leslie Vuilleumier, Leann Schumann, Ros Harris, Maureen Devane, and Mary and Don Coleman have done a terrific job every year and have always managed to bring an element of fun into the sales for our Scouts. For many of you, this is the opportunity you have been waiting for! If you would like to pick up where the McGowans left off or would like to just be part of the sales team, please give either Susan, Joe, or me a call. Please hurry, many applications have already been submitted!

Implementing our Troop program from campouts and outings to service projects and rank advancement requires a tremendous amount of planning and effort on the part of our adult volunteers. Please help to make this a more enjoyable process by doing your share to help us in a few key areas.

- Troop camping equipment is expensive and vital to success of our outdoor program. Each Scout will at some point be responsible for the care and cleaning of some piece of equipment. If this becomes your son's responsibility please help him to thoroughly clean the equipment and return it to the Troop in a timely manner. We camp each month all year and all equipment is needed on monthly basis. It is especially important that all tents be aired out and cleaned immediately after their use as mildew can form in tent after only twenty-four hours and is very difficult to remove.

Cooking utensils, pots, pans, etc. should be cleaned in a dishwasher whenever possible. Thank you for your help with this important issue.

- We encourage every Troop 76 Scout to join us for as many trips, campouts, service projects, etc. as he is interested in. To attend an event a Scout must "sign up" by entering his name in the event sign-up that is posted during regular Troop meetings. This procedure is the same for all events from the ski trip and big trip to summer camp and service projects. Once a Scout signs up we make provisions for him. If a Scout becomes unable to attend an outing once he has signed up he must contact his Patrol Leader and inform him as soon as possible. Please avoid leaving a telephone message or sending an e-mail message to cancel your attendance. If a Scout's Patrol Leader cannot be reached in time please contact the Troop Senior Patrol Leader, an Assistant Scoutmaster or me.
- Part of the emphasis in our Boy Scouting program is the development of a Scout's self reliance and leadership ability. In part this is accomplished through the development of better communication skills. I recognize the duty our Troop has to provide you with details relevant to our event program in a timely manner. It is with this duty that we in turn rely on our Patrol Leaders to properly communicate with the Scout's in his Patrol who, ideally, will pass this information on to you. There is no question this is not a perfect system but it is one that can work and is one I am unwilling to abandon. As Scoutmaster I implement regular training programs for our boy leaders and once monthly meet with them to review what information must be given to the Scouts in their various Patrols. Our Scouts usually deliver this information to your sons by telephone and occasionally by e-mail. We also have current Scouting calendars available at each regular Troop meeting and Committee Meeting and regularly update our Troop web site, [www.Troop76.org](http://www.Troop76.org). We also provide event flyers containing accurate event details at regular Troop meetings well in advance of the actual event. If you feel that you have not received expected information regarding our Troop program please help us by asking your son to contact his Patrol Leader. If the information you seek is confidential or concerns you in such a way that you feel it is inappropriate for your son to pursue then please feel free to contact me either by telephone or e-mail. Both can be found in the letterhead of this letter.
- Our Troop Committee meets once a month to review the status of the Troop. We review, plan, or otherwise make decisions on things like Scout advancement, our camping program, special trips, Troop policies, etc. You are welcome to sit in on any of these meetings or to even become a member of the Committee! If you have a question or concern regarding any aspect of our Troop please let us know by presenting the concern at a meeting. If you wish to do so please contact our Committee Chairperson Gil Mott at 730-2667.

We are already well along in planning events for 2003. Here is what is on the calendar so far:

- Klondike Derby . Friday night to Saturday, January 17 and 18.
- Ski Trip Friday night to Sunday night, February 7, 8, & 9.
- Court of Honor. Tuesday, February 11, 7:00 PM (1/2 hour earlier than usual meeting time)
- Big Trip (probably a bike trip and deep sea fishing) Thursday, June 26 to Sunday afternoon June 29.
- Summer Camp. Sunday, July 20 to Sunday, July 27.
- Camp Sikorsky is returning! Date and details to be announced.

At fifty-six Scouts strong our Troop is thriving and I am looking forward to another terrific Scouting year. Thank you for the trust you place in our adult leaders and me. Please join in, be a part, there is always a need for more adult leaders!

Yours in Scouting,

Michael Carpenter