

TROOP 76 BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA
ST. MARY'S PARISH
RIDGEFIELD, CONNECTICUT



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Dear Families and Friends,

As the summer winds down (unfortunately), we're starting to look ahead to the new Scout year. Let's look ahead and also review some history.

☐ **August**

Troop Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, August 26th at 7:30 PM in Jesse Lee back building.

Patrol Leader's Council and semi-annual program planning meeting is planned for Tuesday, August 31st (first day of school) from 6:00 PM until 8:00. This meeting is for scouts and adults leaders. We'll plan camping trips and Troop activities. I'll bring pizza, and the attendees should bring \$5.00 and their own drinks. Jesse Lee Martin Hall. Class A uniform.

After that meeting, from 8:00 PM until about 9:30, I'd like to meet with all Assistant Scoutmasters (current and prospective), and we'll do some of our own planning.

The next evening, Wednesday, September 1st, the scouts and ASMs will meet from 6:30 PM until 8:30. We'll finish the planning and I'll then conduct a required junior leader training course. No dinner for this meeting. Note this meeting was changed from September 2nd as listed on previous calendars. Class B uniform.

☐ **September**

The first regular Troop meeting is set for Tuesday, September 7th (day after Labor Day). The meeting will start at 7:00 PM with a service project, to clean up our adopted street. The meeting will end at 9:00 as usual. Class A uniforms, please.

Saturday, September 11 is the annual St. Mary's Fair. The Troop will again run the first aid booth, build a monkey bridge, and we also plan to run soda can recycling for the Fair. Shift sign-ups at the September 7th meeting. Class A uniforms. I know that Saturday is also Rosh Hashanah, but unfortunately, this scheduling is beyond our control.

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We're going to try something different this year: on the Tuesday following the monthly camping trip, there will NOT be a regular Troop meeting. Instead, we'll have a series of special meetings. We'll have a Patrol Leader's Council meeting in the back building (Wesley Hall), to plan the following two months. The Troop Quartermaster will meet with all the Patrol Quartermasters, to work on Troop equipment, and keep the Quartermaster Room squared away. Additionally, any Troop member that took equipment home from the camping trip, to clean or dry out, should bring it that evening to the Quartermaster Room (NOT Martin Hall). Finally, we'll conduct Boards of Review that evening, again in Wesley Hall.

Therefore, Tuesday, September 21st, from 7:30 PM until 9:00, we'll have the special meetings.

The Order of the Arrow Ordeal, for those scouts elected by the Troop last March, is scheduled for September 24 – 26, at Camp Sequassen. Each candidate should have already received a registration package in the mail.

Tuesday, September 28th, from 6:30 PM until 8:30, we'll have an outdoor service project, probably at Weir Farm. More details when we know them. This is a regular Troop meeting, and service hour credit, for trips and advancement, can be earned.

October and November

Tuesday, October 5th, is the Fall Court of Honor, 7:30 PM at Jesse Lee. We'll award all of those merit badges earned over the summer, plus various rank advancements. We might even have an Eagle palm or two to present. One hundred percent attendance by families would be great.

October 16 and 17 we're going to camp at Jockey Hollow, near Morristown, NJ. This is a change from previous plans to go to Fort Ticonderoga (the distance was too great for a short weekend). Troop 116 may join us for the weekend.

The October 19th meeting is scheduled for special meetings. The following Tuesday, October 26th, we'll take a night hike, from 6:30 PM until about 8:30, location to be determined. The following Tuesday, November 2nd, is Election Day, and no school. BUT, we'll have a regular Troop meeting, to plan for the District Camporee, the next weekend.

November 4, 5, and 6th is the Fall Camporee at Putnam Park. The theme will be the Revolutionary War and commemoration of the bicentennial of George Washington. Over 150 Revolutionary War reenactors. Putnam Park was the site of the Continental Army Winter Encampment of 1778-1779. I don't believe it was called Putnam Park then.

We will have a regular Troop meeting the following Tuesday, November 9th (proving that rules are made to be broken). November starts our annual fundraiser, and we'll have our kickoff meeting either November 9th or 16th. We'll have at least one Sunday sale of wreaths around Ridgefield during November. More on that later.

Tuesday, November 23rd will not be a regular Troop meeting, and will be set aside for our special meetings.

We will schedule a parent's meeting, to fill out the "Job Chart" and collect annual dues and registration fees. We'll also be scheduling a meeting focusing on youth protection. We'll watch a video tape produced by the BSA on youth protection. This tape is mandatory for all Scouts, Unit Leaders, and parents. Finally, I'd like to have a Life to Eagle Meeting some Tuesday evening this fall; we'll ask some of our Eagle Scouts to relate to our Life and Star Scouts how they picked projects. We'll also review the process from Life to Eagle. Parents of our Life and Star Scouts should also plan to attend this session.

❑ **Other Dates and Activities (Year 2000)**

The Year 2000 Klondike (Y2KK) is scheduled for January 20 - 22. February 4 - 6 is the tentative date for the Troop Ski Trip. February 26 - 27 is the semi-annual Junior Leader Training, for new Patrol Leaders and other appointed junior leaders. **Tentatively**, March 25 - 26 is a camping weekend, as is April 28 - 29, and May 20 - 21 (we'll try to miss Mother's Day, for a change). The likely date for the June Big Trip is June 22 - 25; school gets out later than usual this year (Tuesday, June 20th is the scheduled last day) and the following weekend is a long Fourth of July weekend, and summer camp starts the next weekend.

Camp Yawgoog is scheduled for July 9 - 16. A word about camperships. As we learned last year, Connecticut Yankee Council will no longer provide camperships for Scouts attending "out of Council" camps (this means Yawgoog). The Council will only support camperships for Scouts attending our Council camp at Sequassen. However, Troop 76 wants to see every active Scout attend summer camp, independent of financial means. Therefore, the Troop will provide camperships to Scout families for up to 50% of the camp fee (or \$100.00 assuming a camp fee of \$200.00, at 1999 rates) based upon financial need. Each family will be expected to pay the balance of the fee. We believe by giving everyone almost a year's notice, families can plan appropriately. Troop camperships will only be available to Scouts attending Camp Yawgoog along with Troop 76, but will not be available for the Baden Powell provisional camp, nor for Eagle Week. See me with any questions.

Connecticut Yankee Council is again organizing a Philmont trek for July 10-24. Scouts must be at least 14 by January 1, 2000, be first class rank or above, and meet certain weight requirements. See me for applications if anyone is interested. The slots fill up quickly.

The Council is again sponsoring a Junior Leader Training Conference, August 13 - 19. This is an excellent program for future Senior Patrol Leaders. The Troop will provide a 50% campership for eligible Scouts who wish to attend. See me for more details.

❑ **Unit Leader Training**

As a reminder, **Troop 76 has a policy that Unit Leader Training is required for all registered leaders.** It is optional and available for any other adult (registered or not) in the Troop 76 family. The next Council sponsored Unit Leader Training is scheduled for Tuesday, October 19th, Saturday, October 30th, and the weekend of November 12 – 14. If an adult leader cannot make that session, the next one is March 21st, April 1st, and April 14 – 16. These are good, solid training sessions, that are also a lot of fun. The Troop will pay any training fees, and loan each leader any equipment necessary for the training (like tents).

❑ **Holiday Wreath Sales**

That season is upon us again. Kickoff for wreath sales will be early November, with Sunday sales scheduled for November 28th and December 5th. We may hold a third sales day on November 21st or on December 12th, depending upon weather and availability of staff and “product.” We will need a lot of help from families to get ready. Some of our coordinators have left the Troop since last year, and we have a brand new crop of “salesmen”, so we need plenty of “new blood”. Over the next few weeks, Doug, Chris, or I will be calling each family, to see how much time you can give to this important, once-a-year, Troop fundraiser. Just a reminder, each Scout **must** meet or exceed his sales quota, participate in Sunday sales, **and** meet service hour goals, to participate in the February Ski Trip **and** June Big Trip.

❑ **Camp Yawgoog - 1999**

We took 51 Scouts to Camp Yawgoog in July, and returned with 98 Merit Badges. We had great weather, displayed fantastic Scout Spirit, and had a great time. You should be very proud of your Scouts. Special thanks to Mike Carpenter who served again as Campmaster and Joe Gansert as Assistant Campmaster. They put together a wonderful program for our Scouts. The organizational and logistical requirements associated with a week at camp are incredible. We could not have done it without their help.

Camp presented a number of challenges this year. Even with many more scouts than in previous years, we brought home fewer merit badges. Mike, Joe, and I met recently to review “lessons learned” from camp. We generally thought we needed more permanent leaders at camp with us (adults staying for the entire 7 days), to enable us collectively to give more attention to the scouts, and immediately address any problems that (inevitably) crop up at merit badge classes. We probably should maintain a youth to adult ratio of between 8 and 10 to 1. Consequently, we’ll be looking for additional volunteers for next year.

We also had four scouts who left early due to homesickness. It happens. Additional adult leadership might have helped stem the tide. With additional leaders, at least we could have given the homesick scouts more time and attention without penalizing every other scout in camp. And as many of you heard, Evan Wxxxx broke his arm the first evening at camp. He eventually required surgery to properly set the break, and he’s doing great now. Evan has the distinction of being the first to sign up for camp next year. Evan’s advice for all campers? “Rule number one, don’t run in camp!” Good advice, Evan, and great scout spirit!

Notwithstanding the fact that we advised camp at least 3 times since March that we were bringing about 50 scouts, Camp Yawgoog was somewhat overwhelmed by our numbers. It took until late evening on Sunday to set up additional tents and bunks, but every scout had a place to sleep. The Dining Hall was also a bit overwhelmed, since other units also exceeded estimates, and it took until Tuesday to locate enough spoons, bowls, and salt shakers.

The camp theme was Greek Week. Troop 76 won, hands down, the best dressed contest, with Senior Patrol Leader / Emperor Markus Pxxxxx, replete in toga, entering the dining hall in his wheelbarrow chariot, drawn by his minions. Special thanks to ASM Pete T. for all of his hard work in building the chariot.

❑ **Miscellaneous Thoughts**

We conducted a rough equipment inventory at the beginning of the summer, and there's about \$400 in Troop equipment unaccounted for, consisting of tents, stoves, utensil kits, and griddles (4 of them). Could I ask 100% of the scout families and leaders to look in your basements for remnants of previous camping trips. If you find any Troop gear, **please** let the Troop Quartermaster (Adam Kxxxx) know, and make arrangements to return it, ASAP. This will save the Troop from having to repurchase missing equipment in the fall.

As we get back into camping, please assist your sons when they bring equipment home after a camping trip. Tents need to be immediately opened up, cleaned, and hung up to dry. Cook kits, utensils, and griddles should be cleaned in a dishwasher. Buckets and plastic basins need to be thoroughly scrubbed. Propane stoves must be washed. The list goes on. The Troop has a lot of time and money invested in equipment, and we need our Scouts to properly care for it, after each camping trip. Tents become mildewed and ruined if not immediately dried out after a camping trip. Scouts get sick if cooking kits and stoves are not thoroughly cleaned.

We continue to develop our Quartermaster Room at Jesse Lee. We will be adding an interior, locking door, to control access and enhance security, and we will be putting up shelves. We also ask families to see the Quartermaster or any Assistant Scoutmaster before removing or returning equipment from the Room. Also, please do not "donate" used equipment to the Room. See the Quartermaster if you have something to pass onto the Troop.

When your son outgrows his uniform, please ask him to turn it into the Quartermaster, and he will recycle it. We have an assortment of uniform parts in the Quartermaster Room available without charge to any Scout who can use them.

Each Scout and Scouter is presented with a Troop neckerchief when he joins Troop 76. And the Troop neckerchief is a part of the Class A Uniform, required for all Scoutmaster Conferences, Boards of Review, and Courts of Honor. If your son misplaces his neckerchief, we have replacements for \$10.00. Any Scout who needs a new neckerchief should see me.

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We appreciate the many hours that Parents have given to the Troop over the past year. The help ranges from serving as uniformed leaders, sitting on Boards of Reviews, driving to and from camping trips, making numerous phone calls, serving on committees, attending campouts, organizing picnics, meetings, and service events. Your help allows the Troop to “deliver the promise” of a quality Scouting and Outdoor Program. Thank you.

Thoughts or suggestions or concerns? See me at any meeting, come on any campout, send me an e-mail or fax, or call me on the phone (best between 7:00 PM and 9:30 PM, but not on a Tuesday.) You are also encouraged to contact any Assistant Scoutmaster with your ideas.

Sincerely in Scouting,

Jay