

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



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Dear Families and Friends,

There are a number of activities coming up that I wanted every Scout family to be aware of:

□ **Wreath Sales**

The Troop's primary fundraising project is the Holiday Wreath Sale, once again under the direction of Doug King. The success of the project each year is directly dependent upon the full support of every Scout and parent. The Kick-off Meeting for Wreath Sales is early this year, Tuesday, November 9th, at 7:30 PM at Jesse Lee, during the Troop meeting. Each Scout will be given a marketing and sales kit, with directions on how to present and sell the wreaths, center-pieces, and pine roping. It is important that every Scout attend this meeting. In the past, Scouts who missed this meeting, and were late in picking up their sales kits, have had a great deal of difficulty selling their assigned quota of product.

Prices have been kept at the same level as last year, and the sales quota remains constant at \$350.00 per Scout. The Troop also pays a commission of 5% of sales to a Scout. Additionally, incentive prizes will be awarded to the best salesmen in the Troop.

Over 95% of our Scouts have made quota during each of the last five years, and Scouts have actually averaged between \$450 and \$650 in sales during the same period. And yes, we've had plenty of new Scouts during that period, as well as brothers and neighbors in the Troop, who quickly learned to work together. It's not that hard. It's essential that a Scout starts early to sell. Waiting until Thanksgiving weekend, or later, to start selling, is a recipe for failure.

In addition to individual sales, Scouts will be requested during the November 9th meeting to sign up for at least one shift on Sunday, November 28th or Sunday, December 5th, to sell our merchandize at St. Mary's and one or two other locations around Ridgefield.

For each Scout who joined the Troop during the past year, **we also need at least one parent to attend this meeting**. We will discuss parent involvement in the sales process, including selling, product pick-up and delivery, and accounting for the cash and merchandize. Your attendance is vital to the success of this program and this Troop.

Finally, we still have a long list of jobs for Parents to fill in support of the program, during Tuesday evening and Saturday morning pick-ups, Sunday sales, as well as at other times. If we are unable to fill the jobs through volunteers, we will likely have to resort to a draft or lottery. If you have not signed up to assist, **please help** by calling Doug ASAP at 431-8784 and offering your assistance.

With so many Scouts selling this year, we obviously want to maximize our sales and minimize wastage. That's one reason we are starting early. We're also going to try something different in reporting. Patrol Leaders will ask each Scout for sales results when weekly patrol calls are made. These results will be **called in** to Doug (or another designated individual) by Monday evening each week. That way, we can stay ahead of the demand, and order additional product when we need it, based on real sales results. In the past, we've had to make educated guesses as to our sales, and some of the guesses have been better than others.

Ski Trip

The February Ski Trip has always been the highlight of the Troop's winter activities. The dates are Friday February 4 through Sunday February 6, 2000. Mike Carpenter and John Phillips have again offered to take the lead in planning the trip.

In order for a Scout to be able to attend the Ski Trip (or the June Big Trip), he must have met or exceeded his \$350.00 sales quota, he must have turned in all sales receipts and cash **no later than** Tuesday, December 21st, he must have completed a minimum of one shift of Sunday sales, and he must have performed at least four hours of community service per trip (total of eight service hours if attending both Ski Trip and Big Trip). Service hours for Ski Trip must have been completed between July 1, 1999 and December 31, 1999.

Please note the end-of-the-year cut-off date for service hours. We are instituting this cut-off to allow us to finalize the roster well in advance of the trip (to lock in bus size and room reservations), and to discourage "last minute" completion of service hours for the sole purpose of going on the trip. Our feeling is that community service is an important part of Scouting and we don't want to trivialize it. Given the large number of service projects scheduled for the balance of the year, no Scout should have any difficulty meeting the service hour requirement. However, if any Scout feels that the December 31st cut-off date is a problem, please see me **no later than** November 15th, to discuss it.

The Troop subsidizes at least 50% of the Trip cost for Scouts. In addition, the Troop will subsidize the Ski Trip costs for Adult Leaders. We are limiting the subsidy to registered Adult Leaders who have been active in the Troop, primarily through monthly camping trips or at weekly meetings. While we often extend invitations to other parents to attend, we will not be extending the Troop subsidy to them this year. In addition, depending upon the number of Scouts who sign-up for the Trip, seating on the bus for other than Scouts may be limited to Adult Leaders.

One final note. Due to the high adventure nature and duration of the Ski Trip, the Troop should have completed medical forms for all attendees (with an original signature and dated within the previous 12 months). If you did not provide us with a Class 3 Medical Form for summer camp (or that form was relatively out of date), please send Michael Carpenter an up to date form by the end of the year. Michael has copies or you can download a form from the Troop 76 web site.

Eagle Scouts

Our next Eagle Scout Court of Honor is set for Friday, November 26, 1999 at 8:00 PM, at St. Mary's Parish Hall. We will honor Matthew Axxxxx with the award of Scouting's highest rank. Every Scout and Scout Family is **strongly encouraged** to attend.

Let me try to explain why you should attend, even though it's Thanksgiving weekend, and some new Scouts may not even know Matthew. First, we owe it to our Eagles; it's an honor to receive the award; less than 4% of boys reach this rank. Additionally, the ceremony is always impressive, and well attended by local officials. Interestingly, an Eagle Scout Ceremony often sets the tone for many other Scouts, and starts them on the trail to Eagle. Did you know that when Eagle Scouts were asked to list the top five people or things that inspired them to reach Eagle, 85% listed attendance at an Eagle Scout Court of Honor early in their Scouting career as a strong motivator. They often did not really know the Eagle Scout being honored, but they did recognize the importance of the event, and it affected them.

An Eagle Court of Honor is also scheduled for Friday, January 14, 2000, 8:00, at St. Mary's, for Gregory Txxxxx and Mark Pxxxxxxx.

Service Projects

The Town of Ridgefield is planning a fantastic end of the year, end of the century, end of millennium celebration. We have been asked to help out. Between noon and 5:00 PM, on December 31st, the Town needs help setting up chairs, tables, tents, and equipment. From 6:00 PM until about 11:30, the Town needs help from older Scouts (and Adults) to help run different events. There is a sign-up sheet at each Troop meeting, for different shifts. And this is a great way to get those last minute service hours in for the Ski Trip (and rank advancement).

We plan on continuing our tradition of holiday singing at Laurelwood, this year scheduled for Wednesday, December 15th. We'll have more details at Troop meetings.

Internet and e-mail

The Troop has its own web site up and running at www.troop76.org. We try to keep it up to date with current and future calendars (at least through August 2000). Plans for the "next" Troop meeting are usually available on-line, as well as the upcoming camping trips. Hot service projects are listed. There are plenty of links to other Scouting internet sites, as well as other sites of interest. You can find any merit badge requirement. The phone numbers for Connecticut Yankee Council, maps to Camp Hoyt, camp medical forms, as well as a blank permission slip, are all available. Visit there soon, and often.

We'll post any last minute changes to the Troop calendar there, whenever possible, such as changes in events due to weather (like cancellation of a meeting or camping trip due to a blizzard). The posting won't replace calls from Patrol Leaders, but it will supplement them.

Please recognize, that for reasons of privacy and security, neither last names of Scouts nor Scout e-mail addresses nor Scout phone numbers will normally be listed on the web site, nor will specific locations of certain events be listed, such as camping trips. Last names of adults and phone numbers will be listed if the adult permits it.

Additionally, we'd like to collect e-mail addresses for each family and each Scout (if the addresses are different). Hopefully, we can get out of the "paper" business by distributing rosters, calendars, and other similar information by e-mail. Maybe I can make this my last Scoutmaster letter distributed by mail and send out the next one electronically. If you haven't done so, please send an e-mail to Webmaster@troop76.org; in the body of your e-mail, list your e-mail address as well as your full name (for verification and security purposes).

The Web site is yours. Please let the Webmaster know if you'd like to see more things, less things, or different things on the site. Ideas for cool links are always welcome. Your feedback is necessary if the web site is to be responsive to the needs of the Troop.

☐ **Troop 06877**

An exploratory committee was recently formed by the Scatacook District Commissioner's Staff to examine establishment of a fourth Troop in Ridgefield. Our Troop has nearly 70 registered Scouts. Our Troop Committee has determined that it would be very difficult to accept more than a handful of new Scouts until the size of Troop 76 shrinks to a more manageable level. Troop 116 is nearly equal in size. Troop 49, while smaller, has only limited capacity to expand. In the Spring of 2000, about 45 Webelos Scouts will cross-over into Boy Scouts. Nearly 60 Webelos Scouts will join Boy Scouts in the Spring of 2001. The youth population in Ridgefield is growing, and Scouting is as popular as ever. It seems clear that the three existing Troops cannot effectively absorb the current crop of Webelos Scouts. The demographics would seem to support another Ridgefield Boy Scout Troop.

A town-wide meeting with Webelos Leaders, Troop Leaders, and other interested Parents, to discuss a fourth Troop, is scheduled for Wednesday, January 19, 2000, 7:30 PM, in St. Mary's Parish, Room 3A. If anyone is interested in helping organize and start the new Troop, please contact me, Claire Dibble, or Diane Usas.

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 never on a Tuesday.) You are also encouraged to contact any Assistant Scoutmaster with your ideas.

Sincerely in Scouting,

Jay

Visit us on the Internet at www.troop76.org