



# Troop 695



Eden Prairie, Minnesota

## Quick Reference for Parents of New Scouts

Doug McKenney - February 2009

I put this reference guide together because I was confused about several things as the parent of a new scout. The troop web site, [www.troop695.org](http://www.troop695.org), has all kinds of information, but too much for a new parent to quickly absorb. This is my attempt to summarize many things in one place for you. For more details go to the web site or ask anyone! Also refer to a more comprehensive guidebook given to new parents.

### BSA Organization

- The Boy Scouts of America is divided into Councils. Minneapolis (Viking) and St. Paul (Indianhead) were merged into the Northern Star Council in 2005, one of the largest in the US. Each council is divided into Districts. Our Mustang District includes Eden Prairie and parts of Edina, Golden Valley, St. Louis Park, Minnetonka and Hopkins.
- Volunteers run the BSA. The Council has some full time positions, and each district has one employee, but volunteers are the lifeblood.
- The Council web site is <http://www.northernstarbsa.org/>
- All troops are required to renew their affiliation with Scouting each year. Through the process, chartering (sponsoring) organizations, youth member and adult leader information is updated as well as registration fees and Boy's Life subscriptions are collected/paid. The cost is \$50 annually.

### Communication

- Parents meet the first Tuesday of the month while the boys meet as well. The committee chair will share lots of good information with you. This is an important meeting to attend in order to stay on top of what is going on in the troop
- The "Ship" is 2 boxes of hanging files with the scout's last names on each file. Parents need to gather whatever is in their file in the ship. Patches, forms, paperwork, and anything else that must be distributed will be in the ship. These boxes will be at each troop meeting.
- The troop calendar is maintained at <http://www.troop659.org/>
- The web site (Forms & Publications page) has email lists for leaders, patrols, and the entire troop. These are password protected word documents. Ask anyone for the password to open these documents of email addresses.

### Troop 695 Meetings

- The troop meets every Tuesday at 6:30 except for the Tuesday after a campout. There can be exceptions, so just check the calendar on the web site. Boys are to wear their uniform to each meeting.
- Tuesday After Campout
  - The Patrol Leaders Council (PLC) meets, with the Scoutmaster facilitating. The PLC includes the boys that are leaders of the troop. This is where the boys plan the troop activities.
  - Troop Committee meets monthly to do the "behind the scenes" troop planning. This meeting deals with many topics, including fund raisers, record keeping, web site, health forms, service projects, etc. Parents are encouraged to attend this.
  - The adult troop leaders (Assistant Scout Masters, Patrol Coaches, etc) meet to address any topic. They may join the committee or they may meet separately.

### Boy Leadership

- The BSA is a boy led organization. The boys plan their activities. Adults steer them in the right direction by working with the boy leaders. I really struggle when to step in and when to let the boys do their thing. The answer is never obvious, so if you have questions please ask other adults for advice. The key is to work with the boy leader in your situation and let him work through the issue with the other scouts. Or ask an older scout to assist.
- Each fall the boy leaders develop a plan of activities for the following year (September-August)
- The troop is made up of patrols. Each patrol contains 4-8 boys of the same grade.

- Patrols of new scouts are led by a Troop Guide the first year. This is an older scout that acts as their Patrol Leader.
- Boy leadership roles include patrol leader, senior patrol leader and their assistants. Other roles include scribe, librarian, quartermaster, bugler, junior assistant scoutmaster, chaplain's aide, historian, and troop guide.

#### **Adult Leadership**

- Adults can help the boys as Patrol Coaches (Assistant Scoutmasters) or in the background on the committee.
- The committee organizes background tasks like fundraising, equipment purchases, communication, record keeping, etc.
- The troop is always looking for adults to help out. Boys run a higher risk of dropping out of scouts if a parent is not involved. It is important to help by doing something you enjoy so you stay involved.

#### **Advancement**

- Advancement is a big part of the BSA. The boys have fun and advance their knowledge in many areas.
- Awards include 7 ranks and 121 merit badges.
- Ranks: Scout, Tenderfoot, Second Class, First Class, Star, Life, and Eagle.

#### **Fund Raising**

- The troop primarily raises money through the Christmas tree lot at Super America near the airport and the snack shack at the soccer fields in both the spring and the fall. The troop also sells Christmas wreaths and popcorn. A portion of popcorn sales goes to the council. New this year is the ability to sell popcorn online to friends or family that live anywhere.
- A portion of funds raised goes to the troop, and a portion goes to the boy's account for hours worked or \$ earned. Adult hours are counted for the scout. Siblings only work if no other scout can. This may be on campout weekends or troop meeting nights.
- The scout account money can be used to pay for any activity with the troop, such as campouts, summer camp or yearly registration fees.
- The first funds won't go into the scout account until after the first soccer season (snack shack), so checks must be written to pay for activities before the first scout account summary is given to the parent.

#### **Camping**

- A Patrol is in charge of each campout. This patrol will organize the campout – make reservations, arrange drivers, get permission slips signed, etc. Each patrol attending the event is in charge of buying and cooking their own food.
- The troop goes on a campout most months except December.
- February or March is "Merit Badge Madness". The boys will work on up to 3 merit badges over the course of several troop meetings and a weekend campout. The campout is in a cabin.
- Each July the troop goes for a week to Many Point Scout Camp near Park Rapids.
- Boys not old enough for high adventure are going to the Black Hills in June 2009 for a week. Hopefully this will be planned every 2 years.

#### **High Adventure**

- High Adventure trips are for older scouts (14 yrs old, First Class Rank)
- The troop tries to go the Philmont Scout Reservation every 2 years.
- Some boys are going to Florida Sea Base over spring break 2009.
- The Northern Tier National High Adventure Base is in Minnesota.
- The National Scout Jamboree is held every 4 years.
- A trip to Alaska was made in 2005.