

TROOP
Niceville, FL **157**



H A N D B O O K



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Introduction

Welcome to Troop 157! We are glad your son has chosen to join the troop. This handbook is designed for the Scout and his parents or guardians, to help make a smooth transition into Boy Scouts. Whether you and your Scout have previous Scouting experience or are brand new to Scouting, the handbook lists guidelines that contribute to the smooth operation of the troop. We expect your Scout to discuss the troop events and activities with you. However, if you still have questions, this document will be a good place to start for more answers.

As part of a Scout led troop we expect your Scout to call/contact his Patrol Leader (PL) with questions about activities, events, meetings, and any other Scouting topic. If the PL doesn't know the answer, the Scout should call the Senior Patrol Leader (SPL). If the SPL cannot answer the question, the Scout should contact the Scoutmaster (SM) or his appointed Assistant Scoutmasters.

Troop 157 operations are governed by the Scout Oath and the Scout Law. A Scout will learn, grow, and experience situations in which he will be guided by the Oath and the Law. We believe and follow the principle, "a Scout led troop". You will discover what it means to be a Scout led troop by reading these guidelines, watching the troop in action, and by participating in troop events.

The success of a Boy Scout troop hinges on adult and parent involvement. The actual "hands-on" opportunities (guidance & training) are done by the SM and ASMs. However, there are numerous Troop Committee positions to be filled and several volunteer opportunities throughout the year in which parents are encouraged to participate. By becoming involved with the troop, you will help the troop grow, thereby helping your Scout along his Scouting path. So come join the ADVENTURE!

Mission Statement

BSA Mission Statement: *“The mission of the Boy Scouts of America is to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Law.”*

BSA Vision Statement: *“The Boy Scouts of America is the nation's foremost youth program of character development and values based leadership training.”*

In the future, Scouting will continue to:

- *Offer young people responsible fun and adventure;*
- *Instill in young people lifetime values and develop in them ethical character as expressed in the Scout Oath and Law;*
- *Train young people in citizenship, service, and leadership;*
- *Serve America's communities and families with its quality, value based program.*

These BSA statements provide a starting point for you and your Scout. Join us as we work together to reach these goals--having fun in the outdoors, helping our community, and growing to be responsible young adults along the way!

About Troop 157

Charter Organization: American Legion, Oliver D. Nicholson Post 221, Niceville, Florida is our proud sponsor. The American Legion provides assistance and support to us throughout the year. They currently support the troop with Eagle project funds, a meeting location for our Annual Court of Honor (COH), and a storage facility for troop equipment. The American Legion provides more support to Scouting than any other non-religious group in the United States. We are very lucky to have their support!

Name & Authority: The name of our organization is Boy Scouts of America Troop 157, aka BSA Troop 157. Troop 157 is a member of the Gulf Coast Council, Choctawhatchee District and follows the Constitution and By-laws of the BSA in addition to the guidelines set forth in this document. Troop 157's mission is to strengthen families through the fun, fellowship, and guidance of Scouting.

Troop Website: Our website provides a wealth of information, including our troop calendar. This is managed by our Scout Webmaster. See: www.troop157niceville.com

Troop Facebook Page: Our FB page highlights events that we have participated in, lots of pics or our events. Sometimes we do have information on it of future events but this type info is normally sent via email. This is managed by our Scoutmaster and Committee Chair.

See: <https://www.facebook.com/Troop157Niceville>

Troop Tweeter Page: We use Tweets as a way to get information out that is hot. We will help set you up for this. An example of some info that we find useful to parents is: We arrived at camp safely, all is well! Normally used by the Scoutmaster when on the Troop events. See:

<https://twitter.com/BSA157/followers>

Troop Philosophy

Boy Scouting is Scout Led: We firmly believe in a Scout led Troop! This means that the Scouts should run the troop through their elected Scout troop leaders with advice and guidance from the adult leaders.

If you and your Scout are joining us from Cub Scouting, the concept of youth leadership may be a new one. Cub Scouting is adult led. The Pack is run by the Committee, Cubmaster, and Den Leaders. In Boy Scouting, the Scouts run the troop. The Scoutmaster (SM), with the help of assistant Scoutmasters (ASMs), guides the Scouts in planning and executing the troop program. He is supported by the Troop Committee, which also helps ensure the troop follows the program as set forth by the BSA.

The Senior Patrol Leader (SPL) of the troop is a Scout with experience in Scouting, elected by the troop, who is practicing and developing his leadership skills. He leads his Patrol Leaders (PLs), who are also Scouts. The Scout leaders make up the Patrol Leaders Council (PLC), which plans and executes all activities for the troop. They are assisted, but not directed, in this effort by their SM and his ASMs and are supported by the Troop Committee.

Lord Baden-Powell, founder of worldwide Scouting, said: "The patrol method is not a way to operate a Boy Scout troop, it is the only way. Unless the patrol method is in operation, you don't really have a Boy Scout troop." Why is the patrol method so important? "The patrol is the school of leadership."

We believe that learning through simple mistakes will help the Scout grow. We believe that working together as a team will help the Scout later in life, in school, and in the community. We believe that being outside enjoying the wonder of nature is a GOOD place to be—rain, wind, cold, or heat! We believe that Scouting provides more opportunities than almost any other program available. If your son is active in the Scouting program, he will grow bigger, stronger, and smarter. He will also become more self-sufficient and more confident in all aspects of his life.

Scout Responsibility

Our goal is to let the Scouts make the decisions (with SM guidance). This teaches them responsibility. No one wants to see a boy fail. However, since this is a Scout run troop, Scouts may occasionally fail. Ultimately, failing can be a very powerful learning tool.

Scouts plan the monthly and yearly calendars. If you have a concern with the dates of any function, please discuss it with your Scout. Keep in mind there are other Scouts to consider and it may be impossible to accommodate everyone's schedule. Planning a campout is a lot of work. The Scouts plan when and where to go, how much food to take, the cost of the campout, transportation (whose parents can drive), arrival and departure time, gear and supplies (tents, sleeping bag, sun screen, toothbrush, etc), assignment of duties (cooking and cleaning schedule), and activities.

As a parent, you may experience frustration with your Scout's apparent lack of progress, but please remember that you have expectations based upon your ability to plan and to execute a meeting or trip. The Scouts are just beginning to develop planning skills. Not every meeting or trip will go well. Scouts plan and execute events at their own pace.

Getting Started

Paperwork: The Scout must complete a BSA Youth Application prior to joining. The registration fee is listed on the application. The Troop charter runs from January 1st to December 31st. The registration fee is prorated according to the schedule on the registration form.

If a Scout transfers from another troop, he must provide his transfer information which can be obtained from Advancement Coordinator (AC) of the former troop. Most troops track Scouting information and history using a computer program such as Troop Master. The Scouting history data can be downloaded and emailed to our AC

All Scouts and registered adults must have three forms on file with the troop. These forms are taken everywhere the troop goes, and provide emergency contact information to the leaders. These forms are completed and submitted annually, normally at recharter time in October, for the following calendar year.

1. Current year, Electronic Media / Website Usage Form signed by parents and Scout.

2. Driver / Vehicle Insurance Form
3. Current BSA Annual Health and Medical Report. BSA requires the Annual Health and Medical Record for all registered youth and adults. The form is a fillable PDF and can be downloaded from the BSA website at http://www.scouting.org/filestore/HealthSafety/pdf/part_c.pdf or from the Gulf Coast Council Web site <http://www.gulfcoastcouncil.org/forms.htm>. Remember to keep the original signed copy and provide a copy to the troop.
 - Parts A & B of the BSA Annual Health and Medical Report are to be completed annually by participants in all Scouting events. The health history, parental/guardian informed consent and hold harmless/release agreement, and talent release statement are to be completed by the participant and parents/guardians.
 - Part C, the physical exam, is required for participants in any event that exceeds 72 consecutive hours, for all high-adventure base participants, or when the nature of the activity is strenuous and demanding. Service projects or work weekends may fit this description. Part C is to be completed and signed by a certified and licensed health-care provider—physician (MD or DO), nurse practitioner, or physician assistant. It is important to note that the height/weight limits must be strictly adhered to when the event will take the unit more than 30 minutes away from an emergency vehicle, accessible roadway, or when the program requires it. This form is usually completed in conjunction with the Scout’s school or sports exam and is good for one year.

If your Scout has any medical, physical, or mental challenges please let the SM know. Scoutmasters can make adjustments as necessary. It is equally important to let the SM know of a change in family structure. This can be a big help with your Scout’s over all well-being. Any issues will be treated with discretion.

Scout Joining Package: When a Scout joins the troop he receives the following items:

- Neckerchief (if new crossover, this will be presented when he earns his first rank)
- Troop 157 patch
- American Legion Patch
- BSA Youth Application (to be completed and returned to AC)
- BSA Adult Application (to be completed and returned to AC). We highly encourage any interested parent to fill out an adult application at this time. The AC will inform you of the cost and the required online training courses you will need to complete for your position.
- Troop Roster (emailed)
- Troop Handbook (hard copy or emailed)
- Electronic Social Media Permission Slip (to be completed and returned to AC)
- Driver Info / Vehicle Insurance Form (to be completed and returned to AC)
- Personal Health and Medical Record Form (available as a fillable PDF emailed)

Troop Information

Troop Meetings: When a Scout joins Troop 157, he makes a commitment to attend the troop meetings each week and to participate in the monthly activities to the best of his ability. He has a responsibility to the other members of his patrol to carry his share of the chores and at the same time have fun with scouting activities.

The troop calendar is a good place to find information of Troop events. We realize many Scouts also do other activities, which is great. If a Scout can't make a meeting or activity, he must let his Patrol Leader know. Meetings are usually held on Mondays and we rarely take a day off, but please check the troop calendar online at the troop website at www.troop157niceville.com

Caution, the meetings are run by the Scouts---meaning they don't always start or end on time. We encourage the Scouts to maintain a schedule, but please remain flexible. If your Scout must leave early, please have him coordinate with his PL, SPL, and SM. When your Scout is at the troop meeting he is under troop supervision. It is prohibited to leave a meeting/event without informing the SM. This holds true for any troop event.

We use two regular meeting locations, depending on the event:

- St. Jude's Episcopal Church (SJEC), 200 Partin Drive North (Rt. 285) across from Ruckel Middle School. Monday evenings. Meeting times are:
 - Gathering time at 6:30 pm
 - Meeting starting time at 6:45 pm
 - Ending time is approximately 8:00 pm

- American Legion Post 221, 444 John Sims Parkway, Niceville
 - Display of Scout Memorabilia
 - Meeting place for departure and arrival of troop events
 - Flag Retirement Ceremonies and other occasional events

There may be an additional location for monthly Patrol Leader Council (PLC) meetings. The meeting time and location is determined by the current SPL. Patrols are encouraged to have their own patrol meetings.

Parents & Meetings: Parents are always welcome to attend the weekly troop meetings. If you must have serious, worldly discussions or scout business, please find an empty classroom within the church, and leave it better than you found it. As long as you are at our meeting, please consider joining the Troop Committee. It's a good way to stay informed and also to have a voice in troop operations.

Troop Meeting Rules:

- Field uniforms, aka Class A, will be worn to all meetings and activities unless waived by the SM or SPL due to the type of activity.
- Scout handbook should be brought to every meeting.
- Bring paper and pen to every meeting to take notes.
- No drinks or food allowed in the meetings. (request of the church)
- No Scoutmaster conferences or merit badge counselor meetings during the troop meeting. Please schedule on your time, or before the troop meeting. Coordinate with the SM and the church can be opened early.
- Troop meetings can be used for rank advancement but only when the PLC has including this activity in the meeting agenda.
- Cell phones should be turned off or left in your vehicle.
- Outside jackets should be taken off and placed on the back of the chair.
- No hats inside.
- Appropriate language during meetings.
- Help each other during meetings.
- Be aware of your surroundings, when someone is standing to speak, give your full attention to the person speaking.

Ceremonies: A Court of Honor (COH) is the official awards ceremony for rank and merit badges, and is held quarterly. Attendance is mandatory. Scouts should be in their full Scout uniform, including the neckerchief and merit badge sash. These are formal events/occasions, and the Scouts should look their BEST! We strongly encourage all family members to attend these meetings, even if your Scout is not receiving awards.

Attendance at COHs and troop meetings will give you an opportunity to meet with the SM and his staff and to ask questions and make comments about the troop, the program, Scouting, or anything that is of concern/interest to you. You are also encouraged to call the SMs or the CC to discuss troop questions or concerns.

After the presentation of awards, there is a small social and your Scout's patrol may be asked to bring a drink, snack, dessert, main course, etc. The Annual COH occurs after school resumes in the fall. This is the largest and longest COH, with a food/social event after the awards.

Annual Planning Meeting: The annual planning meeting is normally held in August, usually in conjunction with troop leader training. The Scouting year runs from September through August, so plans are made for each month of the coming year. Plans include campouts, District Camporees, service projects, courts of honor, flag retirement ceremonies, and other events. Updates and changes will be brought to the PLC for approval and then forwarded by emails from the SM or SPL.

Outings: All outings start and end at the American Legion Post 221 on John Sims Parkway, Niceville. Please have your Scout at the Legion before the prescribed time, ready to go. We will

make every attempt to leave the Legion on time. The American Legion patrons must park in the lot so please be considerate and minimize the amount of time your vehicle is in the lot. Please park off the street on the hill if you are not delivering the grub or transporting the Scouts to the event. If you are running late, call the SM or SPL ASAP.

At the end of the outing, drivers will return the Scouts to the American Legion where there will be housekeeping duties for the Scouts to perform (cleaning out vehicles and the troop trailer, holding a Thorns & Roses session, etc.). Please do not leave with your Scout before he has finished his duties and has been released. Also, be punctual and keep in mind that all return times are target times. We may be late due to conditions beyond our control. Scouts will call by cell phone to let families know the arrival time when approximately 30 minutes away from the American Legion.

If you are not available to pick up your Scout on time, make arrangements to have him picked up. Please do not keep the SM and ASMs waiting. Leaders donate their time to the troop and value their family/personal time. If you inform the SM that your Scout is to be taken home by one of the drivers; you must arrange for another adult or Scout to be present in the car. BSA Youth Protection policy prohibits one youth/one adult situations (except for parents and their own sons).

Seat belts must be worn at all times. Each vehicle used to transport Scouts and leaders must have one seat belt per passenger/driver. A car cannot take more passengers than there are seat belts available. Drivers must have completed Youth Protection Training within the past two years. In addition, insurance information must be submitted to our Committee Chair and Outdoor Coordinator when you join the troop. When the Outdoor Coordinator fills in the Trip Request with Council, the drivers must be listed and certified that all have the proper vehicle insurance before a vehicle can be used to transport Scouts. Scouts cannot ride in the beds of pickup trucks, in trailers, or on trailers.

Facial Jewelry: Our troop asks Scouts who wear facial jewelry (earrings, nose rings, etc.) to remove them during Scout functions for safety reasons. Individualism is everyone's right. Those wishing to express themselves in this manner are allowed to do so as long as it doesn't pose a safety hazard. During Scout functions, there are physical activities such as playing outdoor games, walking through the woods, and doing service projects. Schools ask students to remove their facial jewelry before P.E., cheerleading, football, basketball, and other physical activities. If the jewelry is not removed, the Scout may not be allowed to participate.

Radios/Tape Players/TVs/Cell Phones/Game Devices: No radios, tape players, handheld game computers, iPods, cell phones, PDAs, or portable TVs will be allowed at weekly meetings, Scout activities, or camp outs. Exceptions may be made if an adult leader deems it necessary to bring a radio to outdoor activities to monitor the possibility of dangerous weather or if a summer camp has a Scout radio station as part of their activities. Electronic games may be allowed on

long trips during the car ride. However, the devices are not allowed outside of the vehicle during stops or once at camp. The SM in charge of the event will make this determination.

Cell phones are the most common rule violation during outings. Scouts are not allowed to have cell phones during campouts. If devices become a distraction at other Scouting events, they will be taken away for the duration. Please discuss any parental issues or concerns with the SM. Each adult leader has a cell phone in case of emergencies. You should assume that everything is going according to the planned outing.

Phone calls from Scouts to parents are only allowed in cases of emergency. On long outings, a leader may call a spouse or another leader to distribute information email communication to Scout families. For example, a leader may call his wife, who would in turn email news that the troop arrived safely to their destination. If an electronic signal is available a Tweet may be sent out. If the electronic device rules are violated by the Scout, the item will be taken from the Scout and his parent must pick it up from the SM. It will not be returned directly to the Scout. We also ask adults to limit their use of electronic devices while camping with us. We know that you have given up your time and some hot issues may be going on at work. Please use discretion.

Discipline: Most disciplinary issues are solved by the Scouts (e.g. not my turn to wash dishes; he got more food than I got; he took my stick!). We expect the Scout leadership to use their chain of command to solve problems (self-leadership/self-control, PL, and then SPL). Decisions will be reviewed by the SM.

Serious Scout infractions are subject to the purview of the PLC. The SM or adult in charge will resolve the issue with the SPL and Scout. Most cases involve a discussion with the Scout, with an understanding reached and an apology offered. In the event that the Scout exhibits serious discipline problems or if the Scout commits an act dangerous to himself or another Scout, the SM will apprise the Troop Committee, call the parent, suspend the Scout from the troop for a limited time period, and call the police if appropriate. The Scout must present himself to the SM and PLC before being allowed back into the troop.

Issues/Events considered serious discipline cases:

- Issues that jeopardize a Scout's safety
- Continued swearing, cussing, inappropriate language, inappropriate touching
- Throwing of dangerous objects (knife, shovel, stakes, spears, sticks)
- Drinking alcohol, smoking (to include smokeless tobacco products), drug use
- Possession of any type of firearm (including air guns, BB guns, cross bows, sling shots)
- Continued disobedience
- Hazing of any nature
- Other actions deemed inappropriate by the SM

Contraband: If any of the following contraband is found on or is used by a Scout on a Scout function/outing the parents will be called to come and pick up their Scout AT ONCE. In certain instances, the police may be called if deemed necessary by the adult leaders:

- Tobacco – smoking or smokeless/chewing
- Alcohol
- Fireworks
- Dangerous Chemicals – household chemicals, chemicals that are flammable
- Drugs (to include abuse of inhalants & local authorities will be called), except doctor prescribed medication for that Scout and taken as directed.
- Firearms (local authorities will be called) to include pellet/BB guns.
- Inappropriate items – air guns, air soft guns, cross bows, sling shots, dry ice, etc.

It is important that the above rules and policies are reviewed at least once each year so that the Scouts, adult leaders and parents all have the same understanding.

Knives: Knives are not to be carried or used by a Scout unless he has earned his Totin' Chit and have the card in his possession. If a Scout forgets his card, he may use a knife under supervision. A Scout whose card has been destroyed or lost may retake the course and or teach a course to earn his Totin' Chit. A sharp pocketknife with a can opener on it is an invaluable backcountry tool. Keep it clean, sharp, and handy.

BSA does not prohibit sheath knives. However, our Troop policy is we do not want our Scouts to bring them to our Scouting events. They are heavy and awkward to carry, and unnecessary for most camp chores. We believe we have a duty to instill in our members, youth and adult, the knowledge of how to use, handle, and store legally owned knives with the highest concern for safety and responsibility.

Fire Starters: Matches are the preferred method to start fires. Most matches are kept in the chuck box for all patrol members to use. If a Scout carries matches they should be in an approved water tight container. Matches are not toys, and should be used appropriately. Misuse will result in losing the right to carry or use matches. Lighters are also being kept in the chuck boxes. While not preferred this is ok. Just remember, these are not toys.

Fires: Fires and Scouting go hand n hand. Remember, to build them in an approved area. You must have your Firem'n Chit to start fires. A fire should only be as big as you need it. There must always be a fire warden appointed while a fire is lit. It will never be left unattended. For a normal camp fire, two fire buckets must be full and in place prior to lighting a fire. A fire is extinguished when it is COLD to the touch.

Troop Funds

Our troop is financially self-sustaining. The money needed for operation comes from Scout dues, fundraising, and a small portion from donations.

Troop Dues: Dues are \$60.00 per year. At the time of recharter, when everyone registers for the following year, the Scout must pay his dues as well as the registration fee. If a Scout pays his annual dues early (in October through December), the dues are \$48 for the following year versus \$60. The discount for paying dues early is set by the Troop Committee. A Scout may pay his dues at monthly increments (e.g. \$5/month) or a lump sum. New Scouts are prorated at \$5 per month. Annual dues may also be paid out of the Scout's escrow.

Troop dues pay for awards, Scout badges, troop camping equipment, trailer maintenance, and other expenses associated with Troop operations. We do not receive funding from either the Boy Scout national organization or our charter organization. All troop operating funds must come from dues and fundraising projects. Other expenses paid by parents or fundraising include summer camp, monthly campouts, gas money, and high adventure campouts.

Fundraisers: The troop holds fundraisers which are very important since they comprise the bulk of our operating funds. We try to support two Council fundraisers each year plus we sometimes do our own fundraising. We depend on each Scout (and parent/family) to participate. A portion of the funds raised is usually allocated to the participating Scout's escrow account.

Escrow Account: The Scout earns a portion of each qualified troop fundraiser in which he participates. The Troop Committee determines the percentage of funds raised to go toward the Scouts' escrow accounts. The Scout's escrow fund can only be used for Scouting related expenses or activities (e.g. gas money, troop t-shirts, hoodies, camp fees, Eagle Scout project, Eagle Scout COH, etc). Obviously, the more fundraisers in which the Scout participates, the more money will be raised for his escrow account and for the Troop.

A Scout must manage his escrow account. If a Scout ages out (turns 18 yrs old) while with the troop, according to BSA and IRS rules, that money must stay with the troop, and goes into the Troop Funds. If a Scout quits he will forfeit his escrow and his money will revert to the Troop's General Account.

The Troop Treasurer maintains the escrow records for the troop and will provide an update prior to summer camp or as requested. This is NOT a savings account for your Scout (meaning he will not earn interest or a monthly statement) this is merely an account that the troop has set up for him to help pay for incidentals while in Scouting. If a Scout transfers to another troop, and that troop maintains escrow accounts, we can send his escrow balance to the new troop for his new escrow account.

The Uniform

“The Boy Scouts of America has always been a uniformed body. The Boy Scout uniform helps to create a sense of belonging. The uniform represents a democratic idea of equality. It identifies youth and adult members of the BSA, visible as a force for good in the community. It shows the wearer’s activity, responsibility, and achievement. The uniform is a constant reminder to Scouts and adults of their commitment to the ideals and purpose of the BSA. The uniform is a way of making visible members’ commitment to a belief in God, loyalty to country, and helping others at all times.”

BSA Official Policy

By wearing a uniform the Scout shows Scout Spirit. The uniform for Troop 157 is the BSA official uniform, otherwise known as the Field Uniform or Class A uniform. Scouts who do not follow these uniform requirements may be asked to not participate in some activities. Each Scout will wear his uniform to all events. We take great pride in setting the example for other troops to follow.

A Uniform Is: Scout shirt, Scout pants/shorts, Scout socks, Scout neckerchief, sturdy shoes (closed toe & heel) and Scout belt. There is no such thing as being over dressed for a BSA event. The uniform should be neat and orderly. However, when a Scout shows up out of uniform and explains that it is in the wash, we tell him to pull it out of the hamper next time and wear it dirty. It is the Scout’s responsibility to make sure his uniform is clean and available.

Not Acceptable: BSA wants to ensure that we do not portray a paramilitary group so military uniform combinations (e.g. military BDUs and camouflage clothes) are not acceptable. This is a tough rule to follow since many dads and moms were in the military and have a bounty of camo uniforms, but please work with us. T-shirts promoting alcohol, drugs, bands, sports teams, etc. are not acceptable during any Scouting event.

If the Scout is coming to the meeting directly from an organized athletic event (e.g. baseball, soccer) he should bring his Scout uniform and change at the meeting place. A football coach would get upset if a Scout showed up at football practice in his Scout uniform. Please understand that Scout uniforms represent a team also.

Field Uniform (formerly known as Class A uniform): This is the official BSA uniform used at all official functions including regular troop meetings, unless informed otherwise. The Field Uniform consists of the official BSA Shirt, belt, shorts or pants, BSA socks, and sturdy closed toe shoes. The troop neckerchief and slide are to be worn at special occasions including SM Conferences, BOR, COH or other designated events. Scouts should be in full uniforms at Courts

of Honors (COHs), Board of Reviews (BORs), formal ceremonies (e.g. Eagle Court of Honor,), and ceremonial events (e.g. Veterans Day).

Activity Uniform (formerly known as Class B Uniform): The Activity Uniform is worn when playing/working outside or encountering situations when the uniform may be soiled. It consists of the troop t-shirt (gray or blue w/Troop 157 emblem), shorts or pants, with BSA socks, belt, and closed-toe shoes. The official Troop t-shirt sells for approximately \$13. Ask the SM, ASM, or a Committee Member for information. Always wear the troop t-shirt under the Field Uniform shirt. Please leave non-scouting t-shirts at home.

Traveling: Uniforms must be worn while traveling and at all Scouting events. The troop t-shirt is worn under the Field Uniform shirt and may be removed during long drives for comfort. However, as we stop for food, gas, etc., the Scout must put the Field Uniform shirt on over the troop t-shirt or remain in the vehicle. Of course, other clothing may be brought and worn during an outing, if appropriate. The Scout uniforms are usually all that is needed for most outings with additional Scout t-shirts as needed.

Adults: Adult leaders have the same uniform requirements as the Scouts. Our troop takes pride that our leaders set the example in proper uniform wear during scouting activities, including troop meetings. Refer to the many adult uniform guides available on the web.

Merit Badge Sash: Merit badge sashes should be worn at all COHs and other specified formal occasions (BORs, SM conference, etc). Merit badge sashes are available in two sizes and we recommend starting off with the large sash. Scouts quickly outgrow the smaller sash and moving the MBs is not fun. Temporary insignia may be worn on the back of the sash. The sash is never worn on the belt, only over the right shoulder to the left hip. Each Scout should sew his merit badges on the sash. There is no particular order for merit badges on the sash. It is important to securely fasten these badges. Duct tape, pins, staples, etc. are not acceptable. Glue or Badge Magic is not a good idea because a Scout may desire to rearrange the order of the badges at a later date. The Scout should wear the merit badge sash as soon as he has received at least one badge.

OA Sash: If a Scout is a member of the Order of the Arrow and is attending an OA function or function sponsored by the OA, he should take his OA sash with him and wear it if appropriate. Normally the sash is worn on formal occasions (OA banquet, ceremonies, OA elections, etc.).

Scout Pants / Shorts: There are several types of green Scout pants available to purchase. The convertible Scout pants (pants with zip off leg bottoms) work well for our climate. We find that some Scouts only wear the green Scout pants / shorts for special occasions (COH, BORs). When they do this the Scout actually wears the pant about a dozen times before outgrowing them. BSA uniforms are designed and tested for a robust Scout, so go ahead and wear them. The switchback pants work well for both dress and casual use. Wearing blue jeans (as they may have done in Cub Scouts) in discouraged, as is wearing any color other than Boy Scout green.

We recommend the purchase of official BSA pants/shorts in a larger size. Larger sized pants will have extended use and will save you money.

Scout Shirt: Long sleeve or short sleeve shirts can be purchased. Short sleeve shirts work best for our climate. Wearing a long sleeve shirt (turtle neck or tee) under a Field Uniform shirt in cold weather is appropriate. We recommend buying a larger sized shirt that will allow for t-shirts to be worn underneath, also allowing room for Scout growth. Most Scouts will outgrow two shirts while in Scouting.

Scout Hat: We do not have a troop Scout hat. Any Scout hat can be worn, but not indoors. If a Scout wears an unofficial hat, he will be asked to remove it.

Shoulder Loops: Dark green shoulder loops identify Boy Scouting (all troop members) and are always worn on the Field Uniform shirts.

Socks: Several types of Scout socks are available. The green and red strip socks have been replaced with the solid green/olive color socks which wear much better and wick away moisture. Socks may be knee, high top, or low top.

Patches / Emblems: The troop will provide each new Scout with the following:

- Neckerchief (when he earns his first rank)
- Troop 157 numerals
- Council Shoulder Patch if needed
- Shoulder Loops (epaulets)
- American Legion Boy Scout Emblem
- New rank badges and leadership emblems as required
- Service Stars
- Patrol Patches

Neckerchiefs: A neckerchief is presented to the Scout when he earns his first rank (as a Web crossing over) or when he joins the troop. Additional neckerchiefs can be purchased from the troop should the original neckerchief become lost or destroyed. The troop neckerchief is blue with Troop 157 and Niceville, Florida embroidered on it. The Scouts have elected that a neckerchief is not required during Monday troop meetings.

Shoes: While the official uniform does not include a required type of shoe, we encourage each Scout to have a good solid hiking shoe or boot. We realize that Scouts are growing, but an inexpensive hiking shoe/boot can be normally purchased at Kmart, Wal-Mart, etc. Shoes should protect the Scout when he is doing camping activities, such as hiking, running, trampling through the woods, kicking up tent stakes, and all kinds of fun Scout things. Remember, Scouts plan rather robust activities (soccer, red rover, tag team events, relays, etc.) and proper shoes must be worn. Rubber Dutch boy shoes, Crocs, sandals, flip flops, may be used at water front activities or during showers, but are not allowed in a campsite. Scout safety is our primary

concern. Adults are sometimes the worse example when it comes to proper shoes during meetings and events. Please follow our rules. Examples of "poor" choices:

- Going on a 10 mile bike ride in flip flops
- Wearing Crocs to a Scout meeting
- Wearing shoes with no shoe laces to a Troop meeting for sports day
- Wearing football cleats to a scout meeting

Official Placement of Insignia: The Scout will have a uniform inspection at every SM conference and Board of Review. BSA uniforms guides are available at the Gulf Coast Council Scout Shop or online at <http://www.Scouting.org/filestore/pdf/34283.pdf>. You may also refer to the inside cover of the BSA Scout handbook. If you have questions, please ask one of the leaders or the Advancement Coordinator.

Obtaining Uniforms

Financial Considerations: Please contact the SM if financial difficulties prohibit a boy from obtaining a proper uniform. Arrangements for assistance will be made if a Scout cannot afford a uniform.

Uniform Locker: The troop has a uniform locker of previously used ("experienced") and new items. Most items were donated by former Scouts/families. The current location of the Scout Locker is the garage area of the church. All Scouts are encouraged to donate to the troop any uniforms they have outgrown. There is normally a much reduced fee for items. Even old hiking shoes that Scouts outgrow are welcomed.

Purchasing Uniforms: There are several ways to purchase uniforms and other Scout supplies. You may visit the Scout Shop in Pensacola or you may call, fax, or email your order to the Scout Shop. Our Council earns a percentage of the profits on orders placed with our Scout Store. Order are usually shipped and received within a few days.

Please note also that thrift shops and eBay are excellent sources for used uniform items at bargain prices.

Troop Organization

The Patrol: The essential unit in the troop is the patrol and is made up of 5 to 10 Scouts led by a Patrol Leader (PL) and Assistant Patrol Leader (APL). Patrol members elect their PL who represents the Patrol on the PLC. Each PL selects the APL. Patrols may also have their own meetings and may plan/carry out their own patrol activities.

Scouts gain experience in group living, citizenship, and during interaction. Successful patrols work as a team. As Scouts mature, they grow together as a patrol from Tenderfoot through Eagle. However, sometimes the size of the patrol may increase or decrease. Patrol size will be monitored and adjusted by the SPL and SM.

Each patrol will normally appoint a patrol scribe to record minutes of patrol meetings and collect dues. A patrol quartermaster is appointed to work with the troop quartermaster for any patrol equipment needs. Any request for transfer to another patrol must be approved by the SPL and SM.

“New Scout” Patrol: A first time Scout may be assigned to a “New Scout” patrol. This patrol is made up of new Scouts who have just joined the troop and is designed to allow the younger Scouts to work on learning the Scouting skills necessary to earn the rank of a First Class Scout.

All members are often close in age and work on advancement together. To assist them, an older Scout Troop Guide will guide the patrol and for the first six months an older scout from another Patrol will serve as their first Patrol Leader. The New Scout Patrol upon formation will vote on their patrol name, yell and flag and will elect one of their own as PL at the next election. Occasionally, Scouts may encounter issues and choose to change patrols. If issues arise, the Scout will consult the SPL and then to the SM.

Older Scouts: The older Scouts have a special place in the structure of the Troop. By the time a Scout achieves First Class rank, he has learned all the outdoor skills necessary to camp, cook, hike, and take care of himself. The emphasis of Scouting then shifts to learning leadership skills.

Older Scouts teach the outdoor skills to the younger Scouts. Older Scout activities, in addition to the troop activities, are designed to be more challenging. In short, older Scouts are the backbone of the Troop and eventually all Scouts become the “older Scout” who teaches and instructs younger Scouts.

The Patrol Leaders Council (PLC): The PLC plans the monthly and yearly troop activities. The PLC occurs at a designated meeting, determined by the SPL. The PLC will plan meetings, activities, outings, and events at least one month prior to the occasion. The PLC is comprised of PLs from each patrol, Troop Guides, ASPLs, SPL, and the Scribe (as a non-voting member). The SMs are advisors during the PLC meetings. All other Scouts are encouraged to attend. The SPL is responsible for directing the activities planned by the PLC.

Troop Leadership Positions: Scouts hold leadership positions for six months. Elections are normally held in August and February. New Scout leaders are seated at the beginning of September and March. Each newly elected Scout must attend troop leadership training (TLT) in order to wear the “Trained” patch on his uniform sleeve.

The positions below are elected by the Scouts (e.g. SPL and PLs). Scouts may volunteer by approaching the SPL for other positions. The SM approves all positions (elected, appointed, or volunteered).

Senior Patrol Leader (SPL)

The overall Scout leader of the troop. Elected by the troop members. Responsible for planning troop meetings, setting the agenda, running troop outings, presiding at the Patrol Leaders Council (PLC), training ASPL and Patrol Leaders (PL), and for the overall morale of the troop. Reports to the SM. Should be Star or higher rank. Part of the Leadership Patrol. SPL selects his ASPL(s).

Assistant Senior Patrol Leader (ASPL)

The Scout responsible for administrative functions of the troop, and for training the administrative officers in the troop (Quartermaster, Scribe, Historian, Librarian, etc.). Appointed by the SPL. Stands in for the SPL if the SPL is absent from Troop meetings or outings. Reports to the SPL. Should be First Class rank or higher. Part of the Leadership Patrol.

Patrol Leader (PL)

The Scout leader of a patrol. Elected by members of the patrol. Responsible for his patrol's activities during campouts and activities, and for serving as a communications conduit between the SPL and his patrol members. Member of the PLC. Reports to the SPL.

Assistant Patrol Leader (APL)

Assists the PL in running the Patrol. Appointed by the PL. Reports to the PL. Not counted as part of the leadership positions for advancement.

Junior Assistant Scoutmaster (JASM)

Typically an older Scout who has served as SPL and desires another position of high responsibility. Preferably Eagle rank and at least 16 years old but not yet 18. Appointed by the SM. Reports to the SM. Part of the Leadership Patrol.

Troop Guide

Assigned to the new Scout patrol to teach, mentor, and provide leadership to the new Scouts. Assists new Scouts to obtain the rank of First Class within a year. Term is normally for one year instead of six months. Appointed by the SM.

Scribe	Records attendance at troop meetings and troop events. Works with adult members of the Troop Committee (Secretary, Advancement Coordinator, and/or Treasurer). Appointed by the SPL. Reports to the ASPL.
Quartermaster	Scout in charge of troop equipment. Works with an adult member of Troop Committee (Equipment Coordinator) to issue, maintain, and replace troop camping gear. Ensures the troop trailer and storage shed remain organized. Responsible for loading and unloading of troop trailer for all outings. Conducts cleanings of chuck boxes, trailer, and storage shed twice a year. Appointed by the SPL. Reports to the ASPL.
Troop Historian	The Scout in charge of keeping records of the troop. Acts as Public Affairs Officer for the troop. Sends in pertinent information on awards/recognition to local papers. Writes monthly article for American Legion. Coordinates with the Charter Organization Representative, Secretary, and/or Committee Chair. Appointed by the SPL. Reports to the ASPL.
Librarian	The Scout who maintains the troop's library of merit badge booklets, including checkout/check-in and replacement when necessary. Works with the Advancement Coordinator. Appointed by the SPL. Reports to the ASPL.
Bugler	The Scout who announces troop formations (reveille, taps, etc.) during campouts and ceremonial occasions. Appointed by the SPL. Reports to the ASPL.
Chaplain Aide	A Scout who assists the Troop Chaplain (an adult position) in conducting religious services at campouts, offering prayer at troop ceremonies, and encouraging Scouts to study for the religious awards available from various faiths. Appointed by the SPL. Reports to the ASPL.
	A senior Scout who is responsible for teaching skills to junior Scouts as requested and scheduled by the PLC. Appointed by the SPL. Reports to the ASPL. Appointed by the SPL. Reports to the ASPL.

Instructor

Troop Webmaster

A Scout who is responsible for maintaining the troop's website. Makes sure that information posted on the website is correct and up to date and that members and leaders privacy is protected. Gets photos from the Troop Historian and event dates from the PLC to post on the website. Appointed by the SPL. Reports to the ASPL.

Leave No Trace Trainer

A Scout who ensures that Leave No Trace principles are followed on all troop outings and activities. Must take Council Leave No Trace Training. Appointed by the SPL. Reports to the ASPL.

Scoutmaster (SM)

Overall adult advisor to the troop. (Must be at least 21 years of age, and approved by the Troop Committee and the Chartered Organization Representative.) Responsible for safe operations of the troop and for training of the youth leaders. Ensures that the troop program conforms to BSA rules. Attends the Troop Committee meeting and reports on the status of the troop and its events.

Assistant Scoutmaster (ASM)

An adult position. Must be at least 18 years of age, trained, and approved by the SM and Troop Committee. Assists the SM as assigned.

Troop Elections: Troop elections are held in August and February for a 6 month term of tenure starting September 1st and March 1st. The general election votes for a new SPL. The outgoing SPL will conduct the elections, accepting nominations, and supervising voting. Voting will be done by a secret ballot. The SM, ASM, or outgoing SPL will count the votes. A simple majority of votes wins the election. In the event of a tie, another vote will be conducted. The new SPL will be allowed to select his ASPL(s).

Patrols will elect their patrol leader from among its members. The outgoing PL will run/conduct the election. Votes will be by secret ballot. Ballots will be counted by the outgoing PL and verified by an ASM.

All other positions will be selected by the SPL from volunteers. The SPL should take in account those scouts who need a position for rank advancement and who has held prior positions and for how long. The SPL will recommend the names/positions to the SM for approval. The SPL should not promise positions to any Scout.

A Scout should be able to accept the responsibility of a particular position. For example, if a Scout wants to be SPL from September through February and is the member of a marching band, he may not be able to attend Scout meetings, camping events, or devote the time to lead the troop. A better time frame for this Scout may be the March through August time frame when band events are less demanding. By accepting a position with the troop, you are making a commitment to the troop, to support its activities, and to be present at meetings and campouts. A Scout may not be given credit for the job if he does not attend troop meetings and/or outings. Appropriate completion of position responsibilities will be determined by the Scoutmaster. Credit for fulfilling position responsibilities may affect a Scout's rank advancement, so choose troop positions wisely!

Electing Scouts to troop positions is important to the welfare of the patrol and troop. Each Scout should elect the Scout who demonstrates "Scout Spirit" and accepts the responsibility of the position. Elections are a learning tool and Scouts will learn that electing a Scout to a position because "it's his turn" or "he wasn't at the meeting" will only harm the troop and their fun!

Impeachment: Impeachment due to poor performance, lack of performance, continual absenteeism, etc. will only be initiated when the situation cannot be reversed with direct leadership and the added supervision by the adult leadership. This impeachment can be initiated any time during the Scout's tenure in office. Background circumstances must also be included concerning the problem(s). The SM and ASMs will determine the final judgment. The troop committee and parents of the Scout will be advised of all actions and circumstances behind the action.

Troop Leadership Training: Troop leadership training is held every six months for the new troop leaders and is scheduled for after the elections and before the new term of tenure starts.

There are two versions of troop leadership training used by Troop 157:

1. **Introduction to Leadership Skills for Troops (ILST).** ILST is held in August. It takes about ½ day and covers three modules: Troop Organization, Tools of the Trade, and Leadership and Teamwork. This course is required for all troop members. The Scout will earn the trained patch for his sleeve during this training.
2. **Troop Leader Training (TLT)** is a shortened version that covers only Troop Organization and is held in February to train new Scouts and those holding leadership positions for the March to August term. A Scout does not earn a trained patch during this training.

Adult advisors are appointed to mentor each position as follows:

- SPL/ASPL/PLs/APLs – SM & ASMs
- Scribe – Advancement Coordinator
- OA Representative - Training Coordinator and Secretary
- Librarian - Advancement Coordinator
- Quartermaster - Equipment Coordinator
- Historian – Chartered Organization Rep, Secretary and/or Committee Chair
- Chaplain Aide – Chaplain
- JASM, Troop Guide – ASMs
- Webmaster—Troop Committee Adult Webmaster

Adult advisors assign tasks for the new leaders to accomplish in an introductory two-week period and then evaluate each Scout's performance at the end of that period. Adult Leaders continue advising the scout throughout his tenure. If the Scout does not perform his duties satisfactorily, he may not receive full credit towards his next rank. The Scout learns what is expected of him during the training and in meetings with his advisor.

Communication

The primary means of troop communication occur during the weekly meetings, via the annual calendar, and the between the Scouts. The annual calendar exists to keep parents and Scouts informed of the troop's upcoming meetings, activities, and outings. The calendar is available on the troop website at www.troop157niceville.com. Please encourage your Scout to bookmark the site and to check and read the website for news and information. The Scouts plan the annual calendar on a September to September schedule. Scheduled events are rarely changed.

If your Scout is one of the troop leaders, he must use the telephone to ensure information is passed along to patrol/troop members. If your Scout doesn't know what is going on, encourage him to call his fellow Scouts in the patrol, and then use the chain of command, by calling the PL and SPL.

We realize that most parents will receive the troop emails, and we encourage the parents to point out the email to the Scout and direct the Scout to answer the email. Parents--please do not send or reply to emails for your Scout in his name. E-mail at this age group doesn't necessarily work well, but it is good if your Scout has his own email address. Phone calls are the preferred and best method of primary communication to Scouts and leaders.

Please remember to use the troop email addresses for troop business only. Emails need to be approved by the SM or CC before they are sent to the troop. Emails should be short, concise, and always kind and courteous. Do not select "reply all" if the reply concerns only the members in your patrol or a few people in the troop.

If you are changing the topic of an email, but using a previous mailing to send it, make sure to change the subject line to the new topic. Always keep the SM informed with a courtesy copy (cc). Do not use any Scouts' name in the emails if they are about contentious issues.

Remember, the following three email rules:

- Don't put anything in an email that you don't mind seeing in a newspaper.
- If you have a problem, use the phone or go face-to-face
- NEVER send an email in anger!

If you have a concern, please contact the SM. If you heard something that is unsettling, let the SM or Committee Chair (CC) know. Issues cannot be addressed and resolved unless those issues are known.

Lack of Information: One of the biggest complaints from Scout parents is the information flow or lack thereof. Information about troop activities will come from the troop calendar, phone calls, e-mail, your attendance at the meetings, but mainly from YOUR SCOUT. There easiest way to know is to ask your Scout! If your scout does not know something, he should contact his patrol leader by phone and ask.

I Never Heard About It: Communication is the key to success in any organization. As your Scout gets older and takes on more responsibility, he will forget to tell you everything. In the BSA, we allow Scouts to make most decisions because we are preparing them for adulthood. We even allow them to make mistakes, provided safety is not compromised, to teach them that it's okay to attempt something and fail on the first try. Here's an example of miscommunication:

Parent: I was here for the 6:15 pm meeting but no one showed up until 6:45 pm.

SM (asking SPL): What time did you inform the PLs that tonight's meeting started?

SPL: 6:45 pm by phone and at the troop meeting

Parent: I never knew about it!

SM: Please check with your Scout. Did the PL call him? Did he write it down at the last meeting? Maybe he forgot to tell you.

Parent (later): I found where he wrote it down; it said 6:45 pm. Sorry.

If your Scout misses a meeting and he doesn't contact his PL to find out what he missed, he may experience confusion or miscommunication.

Helpful Hints: Buy a planner or notebook strictly for Scouting and encourage your Scout to take it to the meetings and write everything down! If he cannot remember what's going on, he can always check his planner. The planner or notebook is also a good place to keep a copy of the Troop Roster. A small notebook is needed for note taking at campouts. If planning details were discussed at the meeting and your Scout did not inform you, talk to your Scout first, not the SM. If you continue to feel uninformed contact the SM or ASM for assistance, but remember that we will still direct your Scout to his Patrol Leader for the information.

Advancement

Scout Handbook: Scouts must purchase a Scout Handbook immediately. The Scout should take his Scout Handbook to every camping trip and troop meeting. The Handbooks seem to fall apart easily, so beware. The new Scout books use recycled paper, which tears out easily. The pages in the spiral rip out easily. The type book you buy is your choice.

Don't worry if his Scout book starts to look ragged! Encourage your Scout to read his Handbook. Scout Handbooks have been around since 1910 and have changed many times over the years. The way that Dad was taught 30 years ago may not be the same today!

Scouts, use your book to take notes. Fill in the appropriate pages because your scoutmaster will ask you about these items during the SM conference and the Troop Committee may also ask you questions about these items during the BOR.

There is a new Scout Handbook as of 1 Feb 2016. The Scout Handbook shows all ranks in order from beginning to end. All rank requirements are at the end of the BSA Scout handbook. This is where the SM, ASM, or older Scout signs off your Scout's objectives. The Scout should keep his book up to date by filling in the information he has accomplished. This data helps him review prior to the SM conference and BOR.

In accordance with Troop policy, the following people are allowed to sign off rank requirements:

- SM and ASMs.
- All Instructors, Guides & JASMs if signing off two (2) ranks below.
- Star and above if signing off two 2 ranks below.
- Only a SM/ASM for ranks Star and Life.
- Only SM can sign off requirements for the Eagle rank
- Only SM/ASM can sign off requirements for the Scout rank

Committee Members or parents may NOT sign off rank requirements. This is different from Cub Scouts. This ensures continuity during a SM conference and prevents a conflict of interest as Committee members sit on the Boards of Review.

We require Scouts to have requirements (rank or merit badge) signed off within 30 days after the completion of the activity. Enforcing promptness discourages procrastination. The adult advisor or merit badge counselor may not remember after 30 days.

Scoutmasters Conference (SMC): Each Scout is responsible for:

- Keeping track of his advancement progress
- Tracking of all dates & places of each function (hike, campout, summer camp, etc.)
- Tracking merit badge progress and completion
- Ensuring that blanks in the Scout Handbook is completed

A Scout should take his Scout Handbook to the Troop Advancement Coordinator (AC) periodically. This is especially important for Scout through First Class Scout, and prior to any Scoutmaster's Conference. The AC will review his Scout book and annotate his advancement in the troop records. However, the Scout is responsible for the completion and correctness of his Scout book.

If a Scout feels he has completed his rank requirements and is ready for a SM conference and BOR, he must first show his book to the AC. After the AC has verified the requirements are completed (and initials the Handbook), the Scout contacts a SM or an ASM for a SM conference. The contact should be made in person or over the phone (not by email). The SM or ASM will then set a date to meet with the Scout. The SM conference may take place before or after regular troop meetings, at a Scout camp, or at an agreed upon location. The Scout will be evaluated on the objectives and subjects required for that rank, per the Scout Handbook. The Scout is expected to be in his BEST and complete uniform, including merit badge sash with sewn

on merit badges, if he has been awarded at least one merit badge. The SM/ASM will let you know if the uniform is different than stated. The SM/ASM will conduct a uniform inspection and suggest corrective action prior to the BOR. An improper uniform is grounds to delay the BOR. The SM Conference will review the rank's objectives, merit badge information, and even some past rank knowledge if applicable. Most conferences take approximately 60 minutes. This is nothing to get worked up about. If you have been faithfully going on Scout events, reading your books, practicing your skills, and teaching others---the questions and demos will be a breeze. However, you might have difficulty if you haven't been active with the troop.

Scouts who are not prepared for the SM conference will be asked to reschedule the SM conference with the same SM on another date or may receive a continuance of the SM conference. Specific guidance will be provided on what needs to be reviewed and/or discussed.

Board of Review (BOR): Upon completion of the SM Conference, the Scout will verbally request a BOR from the AC. Communication must be in person or over the phone. Email will not be accepted. We desire that the Scout practices his "communication" skills.

The AC should produce a Scout History report and send to that Scout. It is something that a Scout should review with a parent, and keep for his records. Any problems should be reported to the AC immediately. The history report will list jobs, dates of rank; merit badges completed and merit badges that are partials. This document can be requested anytime from the AC. A BOR will also have this document with them when they meet together.

A BOR is usually scheduled within 2 weeks of the Scout's request. The BOR consists of at least three (3) committee members. Parents who are committee members may not participate in a BOR for their own Scout.

The Scout will be asked questions on subjects pertaining to the rank. BOR questions relate to how and why these subjects relate to Scouting, his daily life, and what lessons he can relate to Scouting. If the Scout passes the BOR, he will be issued his new rank emblem during the troop meeting. If the meeting is over when the BOR is completed, the rank will be given at the next Troop meeting. Meanwhile, the AC will input the information into Troop master and ScoutNet (BSA's national Scout history tracking program). The Scout will be formally recognized for his advancement in rank at the next COH.

If the Scout does not pass the BOR, he will be asked to return the following week to complete the remaining items. He should be told which areas to study or reflect on certain issues. He may possibly be told to reschedule the SM conference and/or reschedule the BOR with the Advancement Chair.

The Scout is expected to be in his complete uniform as described in Uniform section. All awarded merit badges should be sewn securely onto his sash with the sash worn properly, uniform pressed, badges securely sewn on to the uniform in the correct location, Scout socks

and appropriate footwear. A Scout who is not appropriately dressed for his scheduled BOR may be rescheduled for another BOR, once the uniform issues are corrected.

Scouts are highly discouraged to attend BORs with taped, pinned, or velcrowed patches. Such methods present an undesirable image. The gluing or Badge Magic method doesn't always work and when the patch is removed it leaves a sticky, dark residue. Sewing is the most secure method, presents the sharpest appearance, and is a Scout skill that all should know.

The BOR is a formal "conversation" with approximately three (3) Troop Committee members. Listed below are the typical steps of a BOR:

- SM will introduce the Scout to the board members and ask the Scout to repeat the Scout oath, law, motto, slogan and outdoor code.
- The board will ask the Scout how he lives up to the Scout Oath, Law, Motto, slogan, and outdoor code (how the Scout demonstrates the "Scouting Spirit").
- The Scout will be asked about leadership. We expect older Scouts to lead and teach younger Scouts. Where and how has the Scout passed on his knowledge?
- Discussion of camping, outings, and activities. How much camping is enough? Scouts should camp as much as possible, but most Scouts have other events in which they are involved. Each Scout should go camping with the troop at least once in a three (3) month period. If a BOR is approaching, we expect the Scout to have gone camping at least once in the three (3) months prior to his BOR.
- The Scout should keep his Scout book up to speed. There are several areas that allow the scout to record his observations, these are great BOR questions.
- In the back of the Scout book are pages to record his camping and service activities. These should be filled in for the SM and BOR.
- Troop Committee members who sit on BORs should be in their best Scout uniform or work uniform / business attire, if necessary. Once again, we expect adults to set the example at the meetings and Scouting events.

Scout Ranks: Scout ranks are explained in the BSA Scout Handbook. Many new parents straight from Cub Scouts push their Scout to earn their rank quickly, but this is the worst thing you can do for your Scout. Many of the skills can be done from memory, but it's the continued practice that gains understanding and cements the skill in their memory. Just remember that Scouting is a journey, and takes a little time.

The following is a quick summary of Scout rank:

- Scout: The first rank and should be met within a short period after the Scout joins the Troop. Requirements are located in the front of the BSA Handbook with a reference page number for each objective. No BOR is required for Basic Scout. This rank is signed off by the SM and is the only rank signed off in the front of the book.
- Tenderfoot: We recommend the Scout start with the physical fitness requirements (item 10a) as it takes 30 days to complete. This rank should be accomplished in two months.

- Second Class: This is where the Scout starts learning outdoor skills—knot tying, first aid, cooking fires, etc. It takes studying, discussion, and accomplishment to successfully complete rank objectives.
- First Class: The BSA goal is for each Scout to obtain the rank of First Class Scout in one (1) year. By the time a Scout completes the First Class rank, he has learned all the necessary skills to lead other Scouts.

NOTE: The best places to accomplish the requirements for the Tenderfoot through First Class are at CAMPOUTS and SUMMER CAMP. READ the handbook beforehand, and discuss and do on the campout!

- Star & Life: Scouts are normally concentrating on merit badges and Scouting leadership positions during this time. Leadership positions must be held for 4 months for Star and 6 months for Life. Each requires training and attendance at the troop leadership training.
- Eagle: Becoming an Eagle Scout is the ultimate goal of Scouting. The requirements are set forth in the Scout Handbook. The hardest item to accomplish is the Eagle Scout project. This is a formal project with set rules and guidelines. Leadership is one of the key elements that must be demonstrated accomplishing this requirement. Remember, follow the guidelines and start the planning early. All requirements for the Eagle Scout rank except the board of review must be completed by the candidate's 18th birthday. Please use the following two web sites to get started:
 - National Eagle Scout Association web site <http://www.nesa.org/>
 - Choctawhatchee District Advancements page on the Gulf Coast Council website <http://www.gulfcoastcouncil.org/Choctawhatchee/adv.html>

Merit Badges: Merit badges expose the Scout to a ton of fun and interesting hobbies, vocations, and skills. Some merit badges are quite easy, and some (like Eagle required) take some work and a certain maturity level.

Two online sites for merit badges include the US Scouting Service Project at: <http://usscouts.org/meritbadges.asp> and http://meritbadge.org/wiki/index.php/Merit_Badges Both sites list the requirements and provide merit badge worksheets for printing.

There is no need to rush through merit badges. Scouting is a seven year program. Through summer camps, Merit Badge University, Greenbar, etc. -- a Scout will have numerous opportunities to earn these badges. Ask your SM for help and counsel on what merit badges are appropriate.

We recommend the Scout open the Camping MB soon after joining. If a Scout does the normal camping many of the requirements are accomplished naturally. Remember, work on a merit badge cannot be started before the merit badge has been opened with the SM.

A Scout should not have numerous merit badges open (aka partial merit badges). It is best to work on these merit badges in a timely fashion and complete these versus letting them languish in an incomplete state. The SM may not let a Scout open a merit badge if he appears bogged down with incomplete or partial merit badges. Completing a merit badge teaches the Scout to follow through with his commitments and responsibilities.

Procedure for Opening a Merit Badge: Scouts sometimes make this procedure more difficult than it should be. After deciding on a merit badge follow these steps:

1. Talk with the SM about opening a merit badge. He may ask you how many merit badges are currently open, and ask you to complete some of them first before opening more.
2. The SM will suggest a merit badge counselor (MBC), and you should then contact them to see if they are available to work with you.
3. Contact, the MBC by phone and ask if you can work with them to earn the MB.
4. To serve as a MBC, the adult must complete an application for approved by the District and Gulf Coast Council. There is no cost. If you are wanted to use a MB counselor outside our troop, the SM must approve the Counselor. Just because an adult is approved by Council, this does not mean that individual is approved by our troop. The SM will ultimately make the decision. Ask our troop AC to share a list of all available Merit Badge Counselors.
5. Scout must obtain a signed blue card from the SM. The SM will sign the blue card and give to the Advancement Chair, who will record the MB is opened. A Scout cannot begin working on the merit badge until the SM has signed the blue card.
6. The SM and AC will monitor the amount of MBs the Scout has opened and will encourage the Scout to complete open badges. A SM may deny the Scout's request for a blue card if the Scout is not advancing, or has too many blue cards already opened.
7. A MBC cannot begin a merit badge for a Scout without the SM signature on the blue card. Allowances may occur, but these are very infrequent. MBCs keep the blue cards while the Scout is working on the requirements.
8. Upon completion of the merit badge, the MBC signs the blue card then gives the card to the SM for final signature. The SM will give it to the AC to be recorded.
9. Very rarely does a Scout actually 'handle' a blue card. After the SM signs it, he may walk it over and give to the AC. Or a counselor at another location may give a Scout a blue card and say pls deliver to your SM or AC. Caution and care must be taken if the Scout ends up with the blue card in their possession. This is the only records of completion of requirements.
10. The MBC must ensure that the Scout completes the requirements as stated. If it says to discuss, then discuss. If it says demonstrate, then they must demonstrate. Deviations are not allowed.
11. Large group sessions are not encouraged by BSA. However, if the MBC is holding a group session, the Scouts in attendance must participate in the group session and complete the requirements as stated. Use of MB worksheets is recommended but not mandatory.

The Merit Badge will be presented to the Scout at the COH, attached to a Merit Badge Award Card. SAVE this card. It may be needed as proof of completion when you reach the Eagle BOR. This is extremely important if you are a military family that moves around. We recommend that you (or parents buy some card protectors) and you put all your BSA cards in them and save for your future.

Merit badges may stay “open” until the Scout reaches his 18th birthday. There is no BSA time limit on merit badge work. The merit badge has been “completed” once all requirements have been signed off by the MBC and once the blue card has been signed by the SM. Requirements that have been signed off do not have to be revisited no matter how long ago they were completed. Requirements that have not been previously signed off must be certified by the MB counselor before signing.

Merit Badge counseling/teaching sessions will not be conducted during Scout meetings (per Troop guidance). Sessions may be conducted before or after the meeting or at any other time agreed upon by the MBC and the Scout. The Scout must have a buddy with him; the buddy may be a friend, sibling, or adult relative or guardian. Two deep leadership applies at all times.

Parents interested in becoming MB counselors may do so by filling out a form maintained by the Advancement Coordinator. Adults do not have to be registered leaders to serve as MBCs, but they do have to complete both a MBC information form, a BSA Adult registration, BSA Youth Protection training, and be approved as a MBC before starting a MB with any Scout. There is no charge to be a MBC. The MBC should have some expertise in the subject matter.

Summer Camp MBs: Many of our Scouts earn numerous merit badges at summer camp. Not all of them are completed, so they are returned to the troop as a “partial MB”. These blue cards will be turned into the AC to be recorded. They blue cards will then be given to the appropriate MB counselor. This will be recorded by the AC.

After summer camp, the lead SM will produce a list of MB completed and a list of MBs that are partials (with what requirements that still need to be accomplished). Look for that email and save it. The AC will give to the partial card to the subject MBC. The Scout will be told when this is done and who it was given to. It is also recorded in TroopMaster (our record keeping system)

Camping

Camping is synonymous with Boy Scouting. During the BORs, we normally ask what the Scout likes about Scouting and most everyone answers CAMPING!

Since its inception, Boy Scouting has relied heavily on an outdoor program to achieve its objectives. The camping program meets more of the purposes of Scouting than any other single feature. Camping promotes teamwork, opportunities for advancement, growth, confidence, and FUN! Therefore, the troop has camping outings every month. Each Scout must have an Annual Health and Medical Record & Troop permission slip on file with troop prior to attending these events (Please see the paperwork section for further information.) These two pieces of paper go on every event in case of mishap.

Patrol Grubmaster: Each patrol assigns a Grubmaster for every camping trip. This duty is rotated among the Scouts, and one Scout should not be Grubmaster at every event. The Grubmaster is responsible for ensuring the patrol eats appropriately, including coordination of meals, kitchen patrol, cooking schedule, and shopping for food & accessories (aka making the Duty Roster). Each Scout will pay the Grubmaster in a timely fashion prior to the campout. The patrols plan their campout menu two weeks prior to the outing. One week prior to the event, each Scout should pay the Grubmaster for the food. The average grub fee is around \$12 for a Friday through Sunday campout of 4 meals, but may vary based on duration and the Scout planned menu.

It is important that the Grubmaster has every Scout's payment prior to shopping. If a Scout forgets to bring money to the troop meeting, he should take the money to the Grubmaster's house ASAP. The penalty for not paying your Grubmaster prior to the event is that not enough food can be purchased by the Grubmaster. Some Scouts will elect to collect money from the Scouts after they have gone shopping. This will sometimes result in a bill larger than \$12 a Scout and does not teach the Scout about shopping on a budget, frugality, and planning. During the course of the year we will discuss during troop meetings how to be a good Grubmaster and how to keep costs down.

Parents---if your Scout is the Grubmaster, please allow him to do the shopping. Allow the Scout to go to the store with you and make the decisions on what items to buy based upon the patrol approved menu. Your Scout will discover that brand name foods are not always affordable based on the grub money they collected. He will also figure out the economics of getting the best prices on the goods needed. Initially, this can be a major challenge, but with your guidance and patience your Scout will become better each time he serves as Grubmaster.

Important: if a Scout tells the SPL, PL and Grubmaster that he is attending the campout, and for some reason cannot attend, it is HIS responsibility to contact the SP, PL and patrol Grubmaster (all 3 Scouts) and tell them that he needs to cancel. If the Grubmaster has gone shopping

already, then the Scout is RESPONSIBLE to pay the grub money even though he did not attend the event. It is only fair, because food was planned and bought per his commitment to attend. The Scout then has one week to pay the food bill. If not accomplished in a timely fashion, the Grubmaster and PL should contact the SM who will make arrangements to take money from the Scout's escrow for food payment.

Patrols: Camping is accomplished by the Patrol Method. All Scouts will plan the campout with their patrol. Scouts may team with others patrols if only a few members of their patrol are attending the outing. This will help with the economy for food purchases.

Equipment: Each patrol has a Patrol Chuck Box and is responsible for keeping it in good working order and stocked with equipment/materials required for camping. The troop will supply cooking equipment (plates, knives, forks, gas stove, pots, pans), but other materials (dishwashing soap, cleaning pads, aluminum foil, matches, etc.) are the responsibility of the patrols. Twice a year the troop holds a "chuck box cleanout" and equipment is restocked from our supply shed. Please do not take equipment home to clean because it normally stays there and never gets back to the original patrol chuck box.

Tents: Each Scout needs to provide his own tent. A two man tent is good for one Scout and his gear. It is not too heavy to backpack with. It should have a full fly and a vestibule is nice to store wet shoes and gear. If you do not have a tent, you can coordinate with another Scout and share a tent for a campout.

Parents—DO NOT rush out and buy a tent. Find an experienced leader and discuss what kind of tent should be purchased. While a K-mart tent may be inexpensive, it may not last under the wear and tear a Scout can put on a tent. The same goes for backpacks, sleeping bags, etc. Don't forget to purchase a ground cloth for the tent. A tent should have a $\frac{3}{4}$ or full length rain fly for protection for the elements. Getting wet is no fun, especially if it's your sleeping bag that becomes wet!

Sleeping Bags: Temperatures range from mid 90s in the summer, to low 40s in the winter. During the winter months we try to do a cold weather campout to gain cold weather experience. There's no need to buy a sleeping bag rated for below zero temperatures unless you foresee you will be doing such camping elsewhere. A 20 degree sleeping bag with a light weight fleece blanket will suffice for all the temperature ranges we see in Florida. Once again, discuss with an adult leader before going to the store. Don't forget to purchase a sleeping pad, one that can be packed around when we go hiking. A lightweight sleeping bag is needed for the summer months. This can be a blanket, a fleece, or just something light weight. At summer camp at Euchee, the nights still get cool down to around 70 and combined with the humidity, it still gets cool.

Behavior: Each Scout will be held accountable for his behavior. We understand Scouts come in all ages and maturity, yet each Scout knows what is acceptable and what is not. If the behavior

is unacceptable, the Scout will be asked to stop. If the behavior is unsafe, the Scout will be asked to leave the outing and his parents will be called to come and get him.

Every Scout has his own set of capabilities. The adult leaders assist those that need additional help by providing guidance and assigning older Scout mentors (done with a good attitude and a smile).

Cooking: Scouts love to EAT! We expect Scouts to do their own cooking and that responsibility is rotated among members in their patrol. A duty roster is a great tool and keeps the squabbles down to a minimum. The duty roster is the responsibility of the Grubmaster. Scouts will learn important life lessons over the cooking fires/stoves. Some Scouts enjoy cooking, while others will depend on others to do the cooking. They will learn:

- The more mess you make, the more mess you have to clean up
- Steak and potatoes cost money
- To cook in foil and how simple it is
- New recipes that will even work at home
- How to cook over a gas stove or over a camp fire
- How to wash dishes
- Teamwork when they wash dishes and prepare meals
- AND... they will learn that it's all FUN!

The patrol will plan the menu during one of the troop meetings. We encourage a healthy menu plan and will disapprove a menu that proposes soda, chips, and other junk food.

Parents please DO NOT send your Scout to a campout with snacks and sodas. Many times this food ends up in their tents and attracts varmints (ants, raccoons, roaches, etc.) and it also destroys the Scout's appetite causing him to be less than thrilled about eating and cooking.

We do not want Sodas at camp, so do not buy them as part of the menu. At some camps the camp store is open and has sodas to purchase that's ok. Do not buy bottled water or bottled drinks. It is neither eco-friendly nor cost effective. We have big coolers (5 gallon jugs) that they can make mix water and Gatorade/lemonade and all will be well.

Adults and Camping: We allow parents to go camping with our troop. You will see that the adults set up camp off to the side, within in eye sight and hearing. We keep an eye on them, but don't Hoover over them. If you want to come camping, you must abide by the rules and learn the Troop Parent Motto. Say it 4 times, and you have fulfilled your training requirement. When your son comes over to you, you need to say, "What does your Patrol Leader or SPL say? Go find him!"

Why? The natural tendency for a new scout in an unfamiliar situation is to search the parent out--whether it's just to see if you are watching, or to physically come over to you. It's also a

natural tendency for the parent to tell the Scout what to do, and push him along. So, please try to remember the Patent Motto.

We also know that Parents don't know the troop or their leaders when you first join. So your comfort level is not that high. We understand that there is a balance that has to occur. We assure you, the Scouts are in good hands with well-trained Leaders that love Scouting and camping.

Once again, Parents are welcome to come camping with the troop. However, there will come a time when you need to pick and choose if your son is ready to be on his own without Mom and Dad in sight. Being active in the troop will help you gain that confidence.

Also realize there are times when the troop needs parents to step up and attend campouts, summer camp, or other events. The adults who drive for the event usually camp with the troop.

All the adults form the Leadership Patrol and take care of themselves by planning the menu, meal preparation, setting up tents, etc. There is no requirement to be an experienced Scouter or camper but we do ask the parent to become a registered leader first and must have completed Youth Protection Training. Parents who would like to attend a campout must discuss this with the SM. Camping with the troop is an opportunity to observe the Scouts in action, with the key word being observe. Parents will need to adhere to the patrol method and refrain from giving instructions to their Scouts—probably the most difficult aspect to being a Boy Scout parent. Leave the corrections to the SPL, SM and ASMs. Please understand that your camping with the troop is not really about going camping with your Scout. He will be spending his time with his patrol, not with you.

Summer Camp: Summer Camp is the ultimate camping experience. Each year the troop makes plans to attend summer camp. This is normally a 6 day event and the best opportunity to earn many coveted merit badges. But merit badges are not the end all, our Scouts should also have fun and that means he can play sports, swim, canoe, and goof off around camp! The SM will sit down with the new Scouts and give advice about the MBs and activities.

There is an associated cost with attending summer camp, and it depends on where the troop decides to attend. Summer camp is a highlight in a Scout's career. Remember, Troop fundraisers help the Scout earn money to help pay for summer camp.

There must be two adults camping at all times, so it may be necessary to rely on parent volunteers. Most camps require that any adults attending are registered leaders, meaning registering and training as Troop Committee Members or Assistant Scoutmasters. If any of the adult leaders attending summer camp would like to volunteer to help at the camp, there are always opportunities.

We are blessed with a great facility called Spanish Trail Scout Reservation (STSR) about 30 minutes northeast of Niceville, on Boy Scout Road, off Hwy 90, just west of DeFuniak Springs. Check it out at <http://www.gulfcoastcouncil.org/camping.html> It has two large camping areas, Camp Euchee and Camp Jambo. Both campsites are somewhat primitive, with Camp Jambo being more so. There is a lake on the property and a Dining Hall on the Camp Euchee side. Our Gulf Coast Council STSR Summer Camp remains the least expensive for the entire Southeastern region.

About every two years, our troop elects to go “out of Council” for summer camp. In the past we have gone to camps such as Woodruff in northern Georgia, Wallwood in Tallahassee, and Skymont in central Tennessee. The cost is more than our local camp and there are added fees for travel (gas and food). We’re talking anywhere from \$350 to \$300 for camp. This doesn’t cost gas and food to and from the location. This is way participation in fundraising is so important. It puts money into the Scouts escrow fund to pay for Scout events, and saves you some money in the long run.

At Spanish Trail Scout Reservation for summer camp, wall style tents and army cots are provided by the camp. Meals are eaten in the dining hall, and there are activities in the evening. Cold water shower facilities are in every camp site, and the central showers have hot water showers and flush johns. Campsites are normally shared with another troop, so making new friends will be easy.

Details for the camp are found in the Scoutmasters’ Guide on line and available to anyone that wants to download it. I could go on and on, but we start gearing up for summer camp about 3 months out, so ensure you are reading the emails and downloading what’s appropriate. All Scouts and Leaders going to Summer Camp must have a physical completed. Scout physicals are only good for one year.

Transportation

Scout parents provide transportation for most outings and must have BSA Youth Protection training completed prior to volunteering for this job. We ask that each family volunteer help with transportation to and from at least two monthly outings over the course of the program year. Unless a family makes known that they are unable to assist, the troop will presume that you can help out when needed. If a family cannot help with driving, they can help the troop in other ways such as coordinating fundraising events.

Parents who drive must coordinate with our Outdoor Coordinator (OC) prior to driving to an event. For insurance purposes we request you provide the type vehicle, name of driver, driver license, plate number, and insurance to troop and update the information as it changes. We will compile a list and keep it on file in case of accidents and insurance purposes. This list will

also be added to the Tour and Activity plan for any Scouting activity that requires one. Normally, one of the Scout leaders will coordinate drivers from among the many volunteers. If drivers are subsequently unable to make a trip, it will be their responsibility to find a suitable replacement.

Gas Reimbursement: The cost of gas for vehicles will be allocated to the Scouts who have attended the campout.

- Drivers should fill up their vehicle prior to departure. Save all gas receipts during the trip, fill up after returning back to the Legion, and present all gas receipts for the trip to the trip POC for reimbursement. The driver has one week following the outing to do this.
- Because we are trying to maximize funds, the vehicles taken must hold 4 or more people (in order to be considered for reimbursement for gas). Vehicles with only two people in them will not be reimbursed for gas, unless there is a special need or circumstance for this smaller vehicle.
- A parent driving a two person vehicle must allow their Scout to ride in a bigger vehicle with other Scouts. Part of Scouting is experiencing the camaraderie of other Scouts. Cutting up, telling jokes, and making plans are all part of the adventure that the Scouts should experience on the ride to the campsite.
- If a parent drives their Scout, their Scout is not required to pay the gas fee.
- A Parent who camps does not have to pay a gas fee.
- Some parents do not request "gas reimbursement" as a means to "pay back" the troop and keep expenses down. Your contributions are greatly appreciated.

Adults and the Troop

Parent Involvement: Most parents were very involved in Cub Scouts, but parental involvement in Boy Scouts mostly consists of committee work, merit badge counseling, and helping the troop rather than your own Scout. Remember, our goal is for Scouts to help Scouts.

Let your Scout be responsible for his own communications. Do not send emails or make phone calls or speak to the leaders on his behalf, especially if it is something he can handle himself—point him in the right directions, give him the chance to accomplish. Scouts are learning to communicate with their peers and the troop adults. They also learn by suffering the consequences incurred by not doing what they are supposed to. NOTE: Just to let you know, we really can tell whether it's the Scout or the Parent sending the email.

Scouting is the time for each Scout to grow. We guarantee in one short year you will see a change. Your Scout will have more confidence, a little swagger, maybe he will be a little more verbose, and he will certainly have more outdoor knowledge.

We ask that you place the troop's monthly activities on the family calendar when you receive the yearly calendar and refer to the troop calendar on the troop website when planning your family's schedule. Please make sure that your Scout makes it to the meeting each week and to the activities each month.

Encourage him to practice the new skills that he will be learning. It is a must that your Scout reads the book. While he may have watched dad use charcoal lighting fluid to start a camp fire and think this is the correct way, we will teach him the Scout method using the Scout book! The Scoutmaster will ask him questions from his Scout Book based on his rank for his SM conference. No trick questions, right from the book.

Where Do The Adults Fit In? Parents also make a commitment when their son joins the Troop. Although this is a Scout led troop, parent involvement contributes immensely to its success. Therefore, we highly encourage at least one parent to register (fill out an adult application) along with their son. We know that many parents have skills that we can use in the troop. We also encourage the parents to attend an occasional troop meeting and attend the Annual Troop Planning Meeting. Parents can also participate by signing on to be the point of contact for various fundraisers or other events.

Everyone cannot immediately be a SM (or ASM) or Committee Chair (CC) upon joining the Troop Committee. All these positions require experience, formal training, and learning. However, parents should work on the various committees that are necessary to run the troop and all parents should help provide transportation to the monthly events. We also highly encourage you to take advantage of any training that is available to learn more about the mission and operations of the Boy Scouts of America and how a troop operates. Our Council Web site is a great place to start: <http://www.gulfcoastcouncil.org/index.html>.

The Troop Committee's (TC) purpose is to provide the support needed by the Troop to carry out the mission. Troop Committee membership is open to any registered adult who is interested in gaining more knowledge of the behind the scenes operations of the troop. We need many volunteers to keep the Troop running smoothly and the TC is an easy place to serve. Troop Committee Training and Youth Protection are required and should be taken online. We also recommend Boy Scout Leader Specifics and Introduction to Outdoor Leadership Skills. Our District offers the courses at a nominal cost. The courses teach you how a troop is supposed to run, Scouting skills, and is a lot of fun! The course is usually held twice a year.

You are encouraged to review the merit badge list and see if you have an area of expertise that could be used to teach a merit badge. Merit badge counselors are always needed and it's not difficult. If you have questions about becoming a merit badge counselor ask the SM, ASM, Advancement Coordinator or any committee member for more details. A MBC must be registered with BSA, but there is no registration fee. So don't stand on the outside moaning and groaning about your son not being able to do this merit badge and that merit badge. Get

involved and sign up if you have a skill, a serious hobby, and a college major in the subject. Our Scouts need you.

The adult troop leaders are the SM and ASMs. The SM and ASMs are the front line leadership contacts with the Scouts. Adults who notice developing issues need to update the SM immediately, and let him work the issue, rather than interacting with Scouts directly (including their own Scouts). However, Safety is paramount, so jump in if that's the case.

Troop Committee members normally play a backup roll, but may provide guidance and advice to the youth leaders in addition to teaching them the leadership skills necessary to do their various troop jobs (i.e. Scribe, Quartermaster, etc.)

Troop Committee (TC): Adult volunteers play a pivotal role in the troop's operation. The troop committee is a group of adult volunteers and handles the business end of troop operations, providing support functions to help develop a quality troop program for the Scouts. Its role is vital to enabling the SM to spend his/her time where it has the greatest impact—working directly with the Scouts. Troop committee meetings are normally monthly. The troop committee normally has the following positions (per BSA):

- Committee Chair (CC)—responsible for the total operations of the Troop Committee in supporting the Scout Troop and ensuring that BSA guidelines and rules are followed.
- Treasurer — ensures the troop budgets are adequate and well-followed, and allocates troop resources to fund programs and activities. Responsible for the troop's financial records including the Scout escrow accounts. Provides a monthly summary to the Committee Meeting on troop finances.
- Equipment Coordinator (EC)—ensures the troop has all the necessary equipment when it embarks on its activities. Mentors/works with the Quartermaster.
- Committee Secretary (Sec)—keeps records/minutes of the troop committee meetings, and works with the SM to keep parents informed of and involved in troop activities. Provides minutes to Committee Chair for distribution to troop. Works with the Historian.
- Advancement Coordinator (AC)—ensures the troop members have the resources needed to meet requirements for advancement and merit badges, and makes sure the Scouts are recognized for their accomplishments. Mentors/works with the Scribe and Librarian.
- Outdoor Activities Coordinator (OC)—coordinates adventurous trips into the outdoors, where troop members can put their skills into action.
- Training Coordinator (TC)—ensures troop leaders and committee leaders receive opportunities to further their Scouting leadership's skills through training courses.
- Chartered Organizational Representative (COR)—each troop is operated by an organization that has been granted a charter by the BSA and that organization appoints one person to oversee its interest as troop liaison. Mentors/works with the Troop Historian.

Miscellaneous Info

Scholarships: The troop has a scholarship fund set up for any Scout who needs some help to pay fees associated with Scouting. If you need this help or know of another Scout who may need some extra financial help, please contact the SM or Committee Chair.

Web Sources: The best source of information about Scouting, ranks, advancement and badges is the BSA handbook. A new one was just published Jan 2016. Other sources of information are the SMs Handbook, the Troop Library with numerous books and merit badge information, and Troop program resources (which can be downloaded on to your personal computer). There are also numerous web sites available, but these are important which you may use.

The Troop 157 website	http://troop157niceville.com/
The official BSA web page	http://Scouting.org/
The Troop Tweeter page	https://twitter.com/bsa157
Our Gulf Coast Council	http://www.gulfcoastcouncil.org/
Council Scout Shop	https://www.facebook.com/gulfcoastcouncilnationalscoutshop
Eagle Scout Documents	http://nesa.org/
Merit Badges info	http://usScouts.org/meritbadges.asp http://meritbadge.org/wiki/index.php/Main_Page

Troop Roster: Our Advancement Coordinator maintains the troop roster. Please make sure the contact information is accurate; e-mail, phone, address etc. Your Scout will use it to contact members within his patrol when necessary. Please print this when it comes out and keep next to the phone. Your Scout should have his own copy.

When you join, please ensure you have the following people in your cell phone:
Scoutmaster(s), Committee Chair, SPL, and your Patrol Leader.

Are You READY For An Adventure!?

Congratulations on reading the Troop Handbook! The information herein has been shared to help you to get started in Troop 157 and is not necessarily all-inclusive. Changes to the Troop Handbook will be adapted and/or added as the need arises.

The Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmasters are available discuss issues or ideas with you. The Troop meeting is Scout focused. The best time to discuss issues or ideas is before or after the troop meetings.

The Committee Chair is also available and interested in what you have to say. If you have ideas and want to become part of our Troop Committee, please fill out the paperwork, take the training, and come join the fun! We hold monthly Troop Committee meetings, except for in December.

Our goal is to mold every boy who comes into the Troop into a Scout and eventually into a responsible citizen of strong character and value. Using the guide of the Scout Oath and Law, we help boys grow into great men. We do it by offering responsible fun and adventure, values-based character education, and with training in citizenship, service, and leadership. Come join the Adventure!

List of Acronyms and Terms

AC – Advancement Coordinator – The committee member responsible for maintaining the troop’s rank and merit badge award records as well as membership records.

APL – Assistant Patrol Leader – The assistant to (and chosen by) a Patrol Leader. This position is important, but does not count for rank advancement.

ASM – Assistant SM – The trained adults who help the SM; have full signatory authorization but will defer to the SM if available.

ASPL – Assistant Senior Patrol Leader – The assistant to the SPL, chosen by the SPL with approval of the SM. Responsible for Scribe, Librarian, and Chaplain Aide, etc.

BOR – Board of Review – A meeting between a Scout and a board comprised of from three to five members of the committee; BOR members can ask the Scout any question, but generally focus on “what do you think and why” type questions about attendance, behavior, and living the Scout Oath and Scout Law in and out of the troop. This is the last requirement completed before a rank is earned.

CC – Committee Chair – The BSA registered adult who leads the troop committee; responsible to the Chartered Organization for overall performance of the troop.

CO -- Chartered Organization – The business or civic group which holds the BSA charter for the troop; responsible to the BSA for approving and recruiting adult troop leadership and providing a safe meeting place.

COH – Courts of Honor – The formal award ceremony held quarterly.

Committee – The committee is comprised of registered adults who meet once a month to ensure that the troop has the logistical support they require to smoothly function. Some of the members take responsibility for specific areas such as advancement, training, publicity, etc. Responsibilities include insuring that BSA rules and guidelines are followed and sitting on Boards of Review.

COR – Chartered Organization Representative – The adult leader who is a member of both the Chartered Organization and the troop; the liaison between the Troop Committee and the chartered organization.

JASM – Junior Assistant SM – A youth leader appointed by the SM to perform the same duties as an ASM, but with some restrictions.

MBC --- Adult Leader who completes an application to serve as a counselor for a merit badge or merit badges. A MBC must be approved by the District as well as the Troop for Scout use.

OA – Order of the Arrow – The Honor Society of the BSA; a separate entity that meets in local Chapters. Members are elected by the general troop membership after fulfilling specific requirements, including cheerful service to the troop.

OA Representative – A senior Scout who acts as a liaison between the troop and the local OA Chapter; he helps bring new ideas to the troop and provides information about the OA.

PLC – Patrol Leader’s Council – A meeting of the Scout leadership.

PL – Patrol Leader – The Scout elected to lead a patrol; reports to the SPL.

SM –Scoutmaster – The trained adult responsible for working directly with the Scouts to help them create the program for the troop. The Scoutmaster trains youth leaders to run the troop by providing direction, coaching, and support. He is trained to promote safety and youth protection.

SMC – Scoutmaster Conference – A meeting between a Scout and the SM or an Assistant SM; focuses primarily on Scout skills and specific rank requirements. A Board of Review normally follows within 2 weeks of this conference.

SPL – Senior Patrol Leader – The Scout elected to lead the troop; reports to the SM.

TLT – Troop Leader Training – A training session designed to teach both general leadership and specific skills required to perform an elected position.

