

Soar with our Spirit! Scouting in Troop 285

(04/08 revision)

Welcome to Adventure!

WELCOME to the Adventure of Scouting in Troop 285! This booklet will help you learn about Scouting, discover what makes Troop 285 special, and find answers for many of your questions. Scoutmaster Bill McCalister, Assistant Scoutmasters Jon Carlson and Clark Haley along with Committee Chairman Richard Ryan will also be glad to answer any of your questions or concerns.

Our Background

Troop 285 is chartered by Coker United Methodist Church. We celebrated 50 years of scouting in 2004. Our scoutmaster, Bill McCalister, has provided consistent leadership for over 30 years.

How Your Son Benefits

Troop 285 has an active, challenging, and far-ranging outdoor program. Scouting is much more than just a wholesome and enjoyable activity. Active Scouts develop initiative, leadership, self-reliance, and self-confidence. Scouting helps boys become good citizens of strong character, who will be leaders and achievers in the adult world.

What Parents Need to Do

YOU are the single most important factor that will determine how successful your son will be in Scouting! **If you want your son to reap the benefits Scouting offers, you need to join Scouting with your son, either as a uniformed leader or as an active member of the troop committee.** Scouts whose parents were actively involved attended more than twice the number of activities and attained more than twice the rank of Scouts with less-involved parents.

Being an involved parent takes time and effort, but it's also rewarding and FUN! One of the reasons our troop is so successful is because of the dedication of so many of our parents. Everyone has a talent that can help the Troop, and your involvement is vital to your son as well as to our other Scouts. BSA policy requires all adults who have contact with Scouts to register with the BSA.

Summer Camp is Vital!

Be sure to put summer camp on your family calendar NOW so your son won't miss out on the most important and exciting week of the year. Each summer Troop 285 typically attends one or two Texas Summer Camps. These are typically located at Lost Pines Scout Reservation near Bastrop, Texas, Bear Creek in Hunt, Texas and Wehinahpay Mountain Camp in Cloudcroft, New Mexico.

Swim checks are held at our annual April Troop 285 Richard Newberry Triathlon in the Texas Military Institute Pool.

Boys who go to summer camp their first year stay in Scouting nearly THREE times as long as those who don't! Those who miss summer camp will have great difficulty catching up with the Scouts who went to camp, and more than half will drop out during their first year.

Programs for New Scouts

New scouts will be placed in a Scout Patrol where they learn about Scouting under the leadership of experienced Scouts (Patrol Leader and Patrol Advisor) along with the help of assigned parents, the Patrol Dad.

Programs for Older Scouts

After a Scout reaches their third scouting year (13 or 14 years of age) and achieves First Class rank, he can take part in Troop 285's High Adventure program. Every year we are fortunate to have several. Examples include: backpacking at Philmont Scout Ranch in Cimarron, New Mexico, Grand Tetons National Park, Bob Marshall Wilderness in Montana, Alaska's Chilkoot Trail, canoeing at Northern Tier Canoe Base in Bissett, Manitoba, sailing at Florida Sea Base in the Florida Keys and the Bahamas, and so on.

Summer Camps also offer exciting special programs for older scouts. Moreover, older scouts may fill leadership positions such as Senior Patrol Leader at an earlier age. At Mountain Camps, scouts learn advanced outdoor skills not available at the Texas Summer Camps.

Troop 285 Goals

Scouting in Troop 285 means Adventure and Challenge for your son and for you. Scouting is a GAME with a PURPOSE: to develop future leaders of strong character, good citizenship, and personal fitness. Scouting's eight methods make it unique:

- Scouting Ideals (Law, Promise, Motto, Slogan)
- Patrol System
- Advancement
- Adult Male Role Models
- Outdoor Program: Emphasis on High Adventure
- Leadership Development
- Personal Growth
- Scout Uniform

Scouts tent and eat with other Scouts in a patrol, led by a boy patrol leader. Dads camp next to their son's patrol and with other patrol dads. Adults who attend more than one campout will be required to attend BSA youth protection and health and safety training. See the bulletin board in the Scout room for dates for upcoming training. Boy leaders plan, execute, and evaluate the troop program, guided by our BSA-trained adult leaders.

Who can Join?

Troop 285 welcomes any interested boy of Scout age (either 11 years old OR have completed the Fifth Grade OR have earned the Arrow of Light, whichever occurs first). A boy does NOT have to graduate from Cub Scouts or Webelos to become a Boy Scout. Visit other troops so you can be sure that Troop 285 is the one best troop for you and your son.

Standards of Membership

We expect each of our Scouts to be active, to advance regularly, to wear full Scout uniform, to practice good manners and behavior, and to do his best by living the ideals of Scouting as expressed in the Scout Promise and Law. The key to successful Scouting is the camping program, and only active Scouts will reap its full benefits.

We expect our Scouts to attend overnight campouts year round, and to make every effort to attend our vital week at summer camp. If a Scout misses one of our weekly Troop meetings, he should contact his Patrol leader. We also expect parents to be actively involved with their son in Scouting, since Scouts with involved parents gain the greatest benefits from Scouting.

Inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated. The troop leadership will counsel the scout about his behavior which could result up to suspension from the troop.

Troop 285 Uniform

The Scout uniform emphasizes unity while diminishing the importance of a person's financial, social, and ethnic background. Additionally, it is an instantly recognized backdrop for clearly showing each individual's scouting accomplishments. Troop 285 requires members to properly wear their Class A uniform at all troop meetings. The Class A uniform consists of the khaki BSA shirt, olive green pants or shorts, neckerchief, belt, scout socks and dark shoes.

The Class B uniform consists of a green Troop 285 T-shirt worn with Scout pants, shorts, or blue jeans. The class B uniform is to be worn during troop outdoor activities whenever we travel to or from a campout, and to any activities where we will be in the public eye. These may be purchased through the troop.

The Scout Handbook has full-sized sewing templates on the inside front and back covers.

The nearest source for Scouting supplies is Musselman's Scout Shop on Military Drive.

How Boy Scouting Differs from Cub Scouting

You may be surprised how different Boy Scouting is from Cub Scouting. But then, boys of Scout age are very different from boys of Cub age. Here are some key contrasts:

The Cub Scout program is family-centered. Adults plan all activities, and most activities lend themselves to full family participation.

The Boy Scout program is boy-centered. Boys plan all activities (with adult guidance), and most activities lend themselves to participation only with the scouts camping and functioning as patrol groups under boy leadership. Moms and other non-scout siblings are welcome at Courts of Honor and other family based activities.

Adults (usually the boy's parents) conduct all Cub Scout advancement. Cub Scout camping is extremely limited, even for Webelos.

Boys and adults other than a boy's parents conduct all Boy Scout advancement.

Camping is the very heart of the Boy Scout program.

Because Boy Scout advancement is so different from Cub Scout and Webelos advancement, few Webelos Scouts are prepared for Scout advancement. Cub Scout advancement is done mostly with parents. Webelos advancement is done mostly in groups with the Webelos leaders. In either case, adults determine the timing and course of the boy's advancement with little input from the boy. On the other hand, **a Boy Scout has almost total control over his own advancement, which he will do mostly on an individual basis with senior Scouts and with a number of different adults.**

How Scouts Advance

Boy Scout advancement is more challenging and difficult than Cub Scout or Webelos advancement, and it requires much individual effort and initiative. It also emphasizes leadership and service as much as badges and skills. Achieving First Class (which should happen within 12 to 18 months of joining Troop 285) takes more effort than earning the Webelos Arrow of Light award. And becoming an Eagle Scout is a crowning achievement of youth earned by fewer than 3% of all Scouts.

Advancement requirements for all Scout ranks are shown in the Boy Scout Handbook. To advance, a Scout must be active, must do his best to live by the Scout Law and Promise, practice leadership, give service to others, learn Scout skills (mostly in the outdoors), and earn merit badges (primarily from adult counselors other than his parents).

After completing all requirements for a rank, a Scout meets with Mr. Bill McCalister in a "Scoutmaster Conference." In preparation, a "Scoutmaster's Conference" Review sheet is downloadable from the Troop website. The scout should write out his answers and know the material before scheduling the conference.

Finally, the scout schedules a "Board of Review" supervised by Mr. Bill Hibbetts. The "Board of Review" sheet is also available on the Troop website and should be downloaded. The scout should write out his answers and understand the material before scheduling the Review. The scout is also required to wear a full Class A uniform.

What can you do to help your son take full advantage of the Boy Scout Advancement method? Make sure your son attends Summer Camp and troop campouts! Offer encouragement and support. Know what your son needs for his next rank. Be active in Scouting with him, and strongly encourage him to attend as many Scout activities as possible, because only active Scouts advance.

Advancement Guidelines

The ranks of scouting offer every Scout chances to learn and to succeed.

Tenderfoot, Second Class, First Class provide a solid background in camping, hiking, first aid, and other important Scouting skills. The next ranks, Star and Life are continued scout growth and development through merit badges and service work.

Tenderfoot Rank: First experience with a Board of Review (interviewing skills). We review how the boy is fitting into the troop and patrol activities. Is he getting the hang of things? Target completion is 6 months after joining the troop.

Second Class Rank: Starting a narrower focus on Scout skills. Teamwork with troop and patrol are important along with the newly learned skills. Target completion is 6 to 12 months after joining the troop.

First Class Rank: This is probably the most thorough Scoutmaster Conference and Board of Review. Basic Scout skills have been learned and starting to be perfected. The scout obtains additional responsibility and feels an additional sense of responsibility. He is now eligible for more activities and should be in a leadership position or soon will be. Target completion is 12 to 18 months after joining the troop.

NOTE: *First Class Rank is needed to participate in the leadership weekend and High Adventure activities*

Star Rank: Emphasis is placed upon service to others, merit badges and leadership. Scout skills remain an important element for the Star Scout. However, the emphasis should be on teaching other scouts these skills. A scout is attempting to understand how scouting philosophy is becoming part of his life. Target age is 14.

Life Rank: The final rank before Eagle. Emphasis is placed on leadership within the troop as well as teaching skills and leadership to younger scouts. Scouting values and concepts should be an integral part of the scout's daily life. Target age is 15.

The Life scout is in a great position to offer suggestions in improving the program and taking on a project. The Life scout is starting to give back to Scouting through leadership, training scouts, recruiting, etc.

Eagle Rank: This achievement is Scouting's highest honor and requires maturity, time management skills and perseverance. The target age is 16 years of age. Once a scout is 18, he is no longer eligible for this award. An Eagle Project is a requirement of this badge and demonstrates his leadership skills and service to others. This project will take a full 6 months for approval, planning, completion and acceptance.

Many scouts do not plan adequate time for project and required merit badge completion and are unfortunately unable to complete the badge. We require Troop 285 scouts to complete all merit badges at least six months prior to their 18th birthday.

Merit Badges

Merit Badges are required on your trip to Eagle. Merit Badges are earned via Merit Badge Counselors who are expert in this specialty. These badges can be earned at summer camps, troop meetings or with additional meetings. Also, specific merit badges are required for the Eagle badge and these are listed in the Scout Handbook. Typical Troop 285 scouts earn 30 to 60 merit badges during their scouting career. We recognize scouts who apply themselves and earn at least 50 merit badges with the "Big Fifty Award".

Over 110 Merit Badges are offered. There are two main reasons for scouts earning these badges.

1. Give scouts more skill in areas they like
2. Give scouts an opportunity to try new activities, hobbies or learn about careers.

Within a scout's first year, Merit Badges should include the following: Swimming, Personal Fitness, Family Life and First Aid*. These provide a foundation for participation in other activities.

Within a scout's second year (7th grade), Merit Badges should include the following: Citizenship in the Community*, Pioneering, Cooking, Environmental Science and Life Saving.

Within a scout's third year (8th grade), Merit Badges should include the following: Citizenship in the Nation*, Camping*, and Hiking or Cycling.

Troop 285 does require certain Merit Badges only be taught and earned within Troop 285. These are shown below with the adult advisor. These Merit Badges are foundational and emphasize life skills which are taught by experts in their fields. If these Merit Badges should be earned other than within Troop 285, the scout may be required to re-take some of the requirements.

Camping*: Roy Schultz/Pat Kidwell
Citizenship in the Community*: Bill Harris
Citizenship in the Nation*: Ted Lee
Citizenship in the World*: Bill Harris
Communications*: Twain Tharp
First Aid*: Dr. J.Z. Taylor
Personal Management*: Bill McCalister

* completed within Troop 285 Leadership

Boy Leadership

In Cub Scouts and Webelos, adults provide all the planning and leadership. On the other hand, boys provide the planning and leadership for the troop and patrols (with adult guidance). This takes some getting used to, especially when adults think we can run things more efficiently than the boys. But remember, it takes practice to learn anything, including leadership. (Practicing leadership skills are a requirement for advancement beyond First Class).

For every rank past First Class, practiced leadership skills are to be reviewed prior to the Scoutmaster conference. The Patrol Leader position is eligible. If the scout does not have leadership practice as a patrol leader, he is expected to volunteer for three leadership opportunities at the monthly Troop Leaders Council (TLC). These are to include a combination of leading troop meetings and campout activities.

Three paragraphs are needed to describe this leadership practice. Elements of these paragraphs describe the activity, what went well, what went wrong and what the scout might do differently. As in practicing anything, this leadership practice may have gone poorly. However, these leadership experiences prepare the scout for future leadership opportunities and his Eagle project.

Parent Jobs

It takes the active involvement of every family to make our active troop successful. And there is a job to suit your special talents and your available time.

Meetings and Outings

Troop 285 has Patrol and Scout meetings every Monday evening.

From 7:30-8:30 PM, Troop Meetings are conducted. At this meeting, a brief opening ceremony is conducted by the scouts, followed by 10-20 minute patrol meetings. Next, older staff scouts conduct special interest meetings or teach scout skills, lasting approximately 20 minutes. Merit Badge Classes, upcoming activities and other scout events are announced at the end of each meeting...don't leave early. We also conduct a uniform inspection at the beginning of each meeting - Scouts should wear their complete class A uniform. Our goal is to have meetings that are FUN for the scouts and informative as well, while at the same time promoting order and time management. In order to conclude these meetings in an hour, we encourage our scouts to be focused and respectful of the meeting structure. Parents are always welcome at our meetings, however, we strongly encourage adults to take conversations outside so as to disrupt the meeting as little as possible.

The Monday after each campout, a Troop Leader Council (TLC) meeting is held. This is a special meeting of the boy leaders of the troop where they plan the upcoming month's activities. Senior Patrol Leader, Assistant Senior Patrol Leaders, Staff Scouts, Patrol Leaders and Assistant Patrol Leaders are required to attend this meeting.

An adult committee meeting is also held the Monday after each campout. This is conducted the same time as the TLC meeting. This committee meeting is open to all adults and participation is encouraged. This is a general planning, critique and policy meeting for the troop.

The primary means of delivering the scouting program is through camping. Troop 285 has a very active camping program and we camp one weekend every month of the year except November, December and the summer months. Normally we leave on Saturday morning and arrive back on Sunday at noon. During spring break, we try to have an extended activity. We have hiked Big Bend, climbed to the top of Texas at Guadalupe Peak, cycled the Hill Country and visited Texas A&M Galveston as examples.

Summer camp is a weeklong event normally held in June and July.

Courts of Honor

Troop 285 holds three Courts of Honor a year (February, May, and August). These formal ceremonies recognize each Scout's leadership, advancement, and other significant accomplishments in front of his family. An Eagle Ceremony precedes some Courts of Honor where a scout earns Scouting's highest honor.

Annual Expenses

Annual Fees and Summer Camp

Troop 285 provides around 600 hours (almost 25 days!) of supervised, planned programs per year to our Scouts. We re-charter each year in February and charge an annual fee. This includes Boys Life Magazine subscription, Council fees, insurance, and troop dues.

Summer Camps range in price from \$175 to \$250 for one week.

High Adventure Trips – 10 to 12 days is typical

These range from \$30 to \$125 per day plus transportation depending upon location and activities. An average is \$50 per day.

Weekend Campout Food

The only cost on most outings is for food (\$8 to \$10/weekend).

Uniform – Class A and Class B

A new Class A uniform costs about \$65 at the Scout Shop. This includes a khaki shirt and shorts or pants, neckerchief slide and socks. The troop has its own neckerchief, hat, and Class B uniform shirt. These can be purchased at troop meetings – approximately \$10 per item

How to Communicate With the Troop

- Scoutmaster: Bill McCalister
- Committee Chairman: Richard Ryan
- Assistant Scoutmaster: Jon Carlson
- Assistant Scoutmaster: Jim Lynch
- Assistant Scoutmaster: Rick Laird
- Assistant Scoutmaster: Mark Jackson
- Assistant Scoutmaster: Chad McNair
- Assistant Scoutmaster: Kent Chamberlain
- Treasurer: Ray Lucas
- News on upcoming events is delivered at the end of weekly Troop Meetings. Boys are encouraged to contact their Patrol Leader for information.
- Emails are sent periodically and after each monthly committee meeting highlighting upcoming events and activities. Be sure to provide your email address to the troop secretary – Patty Clark at troop 285@swbell.net .
- Updated rosters are circulated semi-annually or available for download via a password protected link on our website
- Website: www.troop285sa.org - review guidelines, helpful hints and calendar. Also, use scoutmaster email link for communication.

One Hundred Scouts

[The numbers listed were 1998 statistics. These may have change with time, but impact remains the same.]

Of any one hundred boys who become Scouts, it must be confessed that thirty will drop out in their first year. Perhaps this may be regarded as a failure, but later in life, all of these will remember that they had been in Scouting and will speak well of the program.

Of the one hundred, only rarely will one ever appear before a juvenile court judge. Twelve of the one hundred will be from families that belong to no church. Through Scouting, these twelve and many of their families will be brought into contact with a church and will continue to be active all their lives. Six of the one hundred will become pastors.

Each of the one hundred will learn something from Scouting, and all will develop hobbies that will add interest throughout the rest of their lives. Approximately one-half will serve in the military, and in varying degrees, profit from their Scout training. At least one will use it to save another person's life, and many may credit it for saving their own.

Four of the one hundred will reach Eagle rank, and at least one will later say that he valued his Eagle above his college degree. Many will find their future vocation through merit badge work and Scouting contacts. Seventeen of the one hundred boys will become adult leaders and will give leadership to thousands of additional boys.

One in four boys in America will become Scouts, but it is interesting to know that of the leaders of this nation in business, religion and politics, three out of four were Scouts.

This story will never end. Like the 'Golden Pebble' of service dropped into the human sea, it will continue to radiate in ever-widening circles, influencing the characters of men through unending time."

Upcoming Activities

These upcoming events should be on your calendar:

Meetings:

Weekly Patrol and Troop Scout Meetings

Monthly Scout Troop Leaders and adult planning meetings the Monday following each campout

Campouts – once a month:

September: Bear Creek Challenge – patrol competition using scout skills

October: Static Camp – scout skills

December: No Campouts

January: Backpacking Weekend – map reading and orienteering and other scout skills

February: Backpacking Weekend – map reading and orienteering and other scout skills

March: Spring Break Trip

April: Static Camp – scout skills

May: Static Camp – unstructured weekend

June/July/August: Summer Camps or High Adventure Trips

Events:

February: Scout Sunday

April: Richard Newberry Triathlon (includes Summer Camp Swim Checks)

April: Fiesta Parade Ticket Sales and Chair Set-up

August: Leadership Weekend for older scouts

December: Trial of Santa Claus in conjunction with Citizenship in the Nation* Merit Badge

December: Patrol Christmas Service Projects

December: Annual Troop 285 Christmas Play

Court of Honor:

February/June/August: (Awards Ceremony)

Summer Camps in June:

Lost Pines Summer Camp in Bastrop, Texas

Bear Creek Summer Camp in Hunt, Texas

Wehinahpay Mountain Camp in Cloudcroft, New Mexico

High Adventure Trips in June and July – (2 to 3 trips per summer):

Examples include:

USA: New Mexico, Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, Florida, Alaska, Hawaii, etc

Canada: Northwest Territories, Yukon, Manitoba, British Columbia, etc.

International: Bahamas, Europe, Central America, etc.