



# TROOP221BSA.ORG



Cave Spring United Methodist Church • Roanoke, VA

Big Lick District, Blue Ridge Mountains Council

## PARENTS' GUIDE

### Welcome to Troop 221!

Congratulations to you and your son for his decision to join Troop 221! We want Scouting to be just as much fun and as rewarding for you as we know it will be for him. With over 50 years of experience, Troop 221 has much to share and lots of support to give.



You can do much to help your son succeed in Scouting, and you can make new friends yourself and participate in many adventures. No matter how little or how much you do, your contribution will always be appreciated and you can be proud of playing an important part in your son's growth and development as a mature, responsible young man.

All Boy Scout events are open to all adults, and we encourage you to come to meetings and go on outings when you can. As a bonus to him, youth who have parents involved in Scouting attend more meetings, go on more outings, and advance quicker and higher in rank. Read on to find out more about what our Scouts do and how you can be part of the adventure.

### Weekly Meetings

Meetings are held **every Monday evening, 7:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.** in the upstairs Fellowship Hall of Cave Spring United Methodist Church. Meetings are also held during the summer. For additional information about meetings and special outings, check the troop's calendar on our website, <http://www.troop221bsa.org>.

**Scoutmaster**

**Mark Vitello 725-8633**

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**Committee Chair**

**Paul Weary 989-7604**

**jcrie@cox.net**

Two registered adult leaders, or one adult leader and a Scout parent, both at least 21 years of age, must be present at all meetings, trips, and outings. All adults, regardless of participation level are required to take BSA Youth Protection (which is available on-line at [www.bsa-brmc.org](http://www.bsa-brmc.org)). The youth protection training program is excellent, and teaches important principles for protecting youth from physical, emotional and sexual abuse that can be applied both inside and outside Scouting.

## Boy Scout Advancement



You can participate in Troop 221 by being helping teach the skills needed for the youth to advance in rank. The Boy Scout advancement program provides a ladder of skills that a Scout climbs at his own pace. As he acquires these skills, he moves up through a series of ranks for which he is awarded badges. Scouts who do not advance in rank and do not experience the entire Scouting Program have a higher probability of losing interest and then dropping out.

Advancement in the Boy Scouts is different from what you and your son may have experienced in Cub Scouting. In Cub Scouts, the program is run by the adult den leaders and the den advances together, usually automatically as they move up in grades in school. In Boy Scouts, a young man must be self-motivated to progress at his own pace. Rank advancement is not automatic with grade or age. Boy Scouts does not recognize a family member (or "Akela") for signing off on advancement requirements as does Cub Scouts.

Details for advancement are contained in the Boy Scout Handbook, which every Scout should obtain as soon as possible after joining the Troop. You should take a look at Chapter 1. This short chapter has a summary of advancement. A Webelos Scout who earned the Arrow of Light only needs to ask for a Scoutmaster conference to earn the entry rank of Scout. Basic Scouting skills are emphasized in the first three ranks of Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class. The remaining ranks, Star, Life, and Eagle are more flexible in that the Scout broadens his skills and develops his personal interests by working on merit badges, developing his leadership skills, learning the value of service, and completing a special project.

Before a Scout passes a requirement for advancement, he must demonstrate or prove his knowledge or mastery of a skill to an older Scout.

These older Scouts have completed youth leadership training and wear a "Trained" strip on the left shoulder of their uniform. The Scout then presents his "sign-off sheet" for the older, trained Scout to sign, indicating the requirement has been met. It is important for the younger Scout to keep up with his sign-off sheet, because it is *the* official record of his progress.



When a Scout has completed all the requirements for a rank, he meets with the Scoutmaster in a Scoutmaster Conference to review his progress and discuss continued advancement. He then appears before a Board of Review composed of members of the Troop adult leadership. The purpose of the review is not an examination. Rather it is to determine the Scout's attitude and acceptance of Scouting's ideals, to discuss the Scout's experiences in the Troop, and to encourage him to keep working towards greater advancement.

The rank of Eagle Scout is taken most seriously by the troop. This is a lifetime honor which a Scout can earn only through significant amounts of discipline, hard work, and commitment. Including the rank of Eagle on a college or job application can have a very positive influence on those reading and evaluating the application. Because of the significance of the rank of Eagle Scout on a man's life, the very well defined and stringent requirements issued by the National Council BSA are adhered-to by the Troop.

One thing to remember that not all youth will advance in rank at the same rate, and that it is alright if a Scout is less interested in rank advancement than other activities, such as hiking or camping or community service. All can be good Scouts and will benefit by learning to make ethical decisions throughout their lives by living the values of the Scout Oath and the Scout Law.

### Scout Oath (or Promise)

On my honor I will do my best  
To do my duty to God and my country  
and to obey the Scout Law;  
To help other people at all times;  
To keep myself physically strong,  
mentally awake, and morally straight.

### Merit Badges Counselors



The merit badge program expands a Scout's areas of interest and encourages him to meet and work with adults in a chosen subject. Merit badges are earned by a Scout working with a registered merit badge counselor.

All parents are encouraged to become merit badge counselors by talking with a troop leader and taking the short training class. This way you can share your special talents, interests, and expertise with the Scouts, and contribute to their advancement. A list of merit badges and their requirements can be found on line at [www.meritbadge.com](http://www.meritbadge.com).

### Camping and Hiking

Troop 221 is a high adventure troop that loves to camp and hike. Outings are planned by the youth with the supervision of the adults, and take place throughout the year. We expect the Scouts to participate, and invite you to come along! Our goal is to provide a safe and wholesome experience for all youth in accordance with The BSA Guide to Safe Scouting. The Guide is available on line on the council website, [www.bsa-brmc.org](http://www.bsa-brmc.org).



Based on the age-appropriate principle, the degree of difficulty of the events varies, with the more strenuous outings designed for the older Scouts, and less strenuous activities for younger Scouts. Minimum age and rank limitations are placed on some of the more difficult outings. A minimum number of days and

nights of camping and hiking are written into rank advancement requirements. All campouts and hikes are open to the adults.

Eventually your son will need a sleeping bag, backpack with frame, mess kit and utensils, and hiking boots. The Troop has some equipment to borrow (such as tents) and larger Patrol items (such as cooking gear). Don't feel compelled to immediately buy all the outdoor equipment you think your Scout may need. Talk to other adults, let your Scout go on a few low-intensity outings to discover what works for his peers, and gradually build a collection of reasonably-priced and reliable equipment. Often, a list of recommended equipment is included in outing notices posted on the webpage calendar.



## Summer Camp



Each summer, Troop 221 attends the first week of Camp Powhatan at the Blue Ridge Scout Reservation, usually in mid-June from Sunday to Saturday. The Reservation is the largest Council-owned Boy Scout reservation in the US, and covers more than 18,000 acres of southern Pulaski County. Refer to the troop's website calendar for specific dates for next summer.

First year Scouts are encouraged to attend Brownsea Island, a special Scouting-skills and patrol-building program at Camp Powhatan designed especially for them. Older Scouts can earn merit badges or attend special programs including New River Adventure, High Knoll Trail Camp, Fish Camp, Voyageur Trek, and Mountain Man Outpost. The Aquatics Base and SCUBA camps operate on property at nearby Claytor Lake. A new aquatics base will be open in 2008. At Powhatan, the adults of Troop 221 teach merit badges, assist with Brown Sea Island, hone their outdoor cooking skills, and participate in camp improvement projects in addition to relaxing and enjoying themselves.

Troop 221 also offers special high-adventure trips to Philmont Scout Ranch at Cimarron, New Mexico, Florida National High Adventure Sea Base, and the Northern Tier National High Adventure Bases in Minnesota. The troop typically rotates annual trips between the different programs.

All these outdoor adventures are available to adults. Medical forms for youth and adults are required for every outdoor activity, including hikes, campouts, and summer camp. Medical forms are available on-line and from the adult leaders. The medical forms are not just necessary in case of an emergency, but also help bring to the leaders' attention to any special conditions that may require special considerations. Above all, we want to keep everyone safe and avoid placing them in potentially dangerous situations. Keeping up-to-date forms on file with the troop greatly simplifies this task.

## Service Projects

Troop 221 Scouts and adult leaders develop a sense of citizenship and strengthen their community by participating in special service projects throughout the year. The projects are performed for various local charities and organizations, and help make the Scouts more aware of how they can contribute to our community.

## The Boy Run, Adult Supported Troop

To help you see where you fit in, this section describes how Troop 221 is organized. A Boy Scout Troop is made up of Patrols. Each Patrol usually consists of a Patrol Leader and four to eight Scouts. The boys in a patrol elect their Patrol Leader. The Patrol Leaders, with the Senior Patrol Leader as their head, form the Patrol Leaders' Council which plans the activities and runs the troop meetings. Critical to the youth's success is trained adults who mentor and advise the young leaders.



New Scouts during their first year are assigned to a patrol together, with older Scouts serving as Troop Guides to provide special assistance to the young Scouts. After 9 to 12 months, they will be re-assigned to another patrol where they will continue to grow in self-reliance. They will also be availed the opportunity to begin assuming leadership in the troop, possibly as a Patrol Leader or other position of responsibility.

Parents are always welcome to join the troop activities. However, parents are cautioned to not plan on staying too close to their sons. The Scouts need to work within their patrols so that they can develop as a team. Each adult leader is encouraged to view all Scouts equally rather than specifically focusing on your son. Quite often a boy's development is enhanced by working with an adult other than his parent.

## What are Some Specific Things I Can Do?

So far, we've talked in general about how you can participate as an adult volunteer. But here are some specific things all parents can and should do to help deliver the Scouting program to our youth.

1. Read the Scout Handbook and the purpose and methods of Scouting.
2. Follow your Scout's progress (or lack of it) and offer encouragement.
3. Encourage the Scout to take responsibility for his advancement by contacting adult leaders for his conferences and reviews.
4. Support individual Scouts and the Troop by attending the Courts of Honor.

### Scout Law

A Scout is  
Trustworthy,  
Loyal,  
Helpful,  
Friendly,  
Courteous,  
Kind,  
Obedient,  
Cheerful,  
Thrifty,  
Brave,  
Clean, and  
Reverent

5. Pay fees promptly. The Troop is continually putting out money for activity reservations, equipment, awards, and other things. It is essential that parents meet payment deadlines for all their son's Troop obligations, including dues, activity and camp fees, and major outing payments
6. Being aware of upcoming events and checking the troop calendar on the website often.
7. Serve as a merit badge counselor in an area in which you have specialized knowledge and skills. There are more than 120 diverse merit badges to choose from.
8. Transport and accompany Scouts on outings. It takes several drivers and adult hikers and campers to transport and supervise our Scouts on their outings. Your help is greatly needed and it is hoped that you will offer to help as often as possible.
9. Turn in all required forms promptly. It makes the job of the volunteer who keeps track of all of these necessary forms so much easier when everyone helps by being prompt in returning them (e.g. medical and motor vehicle insurance forms). If required forms are not turned in, unfortunately that Scout may not participate in the outing.
10. Assist, as requested in all Troop fund-raisers and other such activities. All assistance lowers the cost of the program we offer to the Scouts and lowers each family's cash outlay for their Scouts.

The Boy Scouts of America is very concerned with child and drug abuse. To become a Scout, one of the joining requirements is to discuss with his parents "How to Protect Your Children from Child Abuse and Drug Abuse: A Parent's Guide." This guide is in the front section of the Boy Scout Handbook and is the only requirement that a parent may sign.

### **The Importance of Trained Adult Leaders**



You can contribute to your Scout's and the Troop's success in many ways, regardless of the amount of time you can give. If you want to do more, you can become an officially BSA trained adult leader.

Although the Scouts run the program, it is necessary that these young men have adults as role models and to help them develop their skills and ensure that the program accomplishes its goals. The youth interact directly with the Scoutmaster and other adult leaders who mentor and guide them.

Every Scout deserves a trained adult leader. The more BSA training an adult has, the more he can contribute to the success of the Scouts individually and to the Troop as a whole. The adult leader for administration is the Troop Committee Chair, and the leader of the youth program is the Scoutmaster. They are supported by a team of Troop Committee Members and Assistant

Scoutmasters. Parents are encouraged to join the adult leadership team as a Committee Member or as an Assistant Scoutmaster.

Best of all, by volunteering as an adult leader in Troop 221, you will be supported by a strong team of trained adults who have many years of experience in Scouting, and are more than willing to share what they know with you. Troop 221 is led by an excellent Scoutmaster and Committee Chair, many trained Assistant Scoutmasters and Committee Members, and many leaders who have completed Woodbadge, the highest training program for adult volunteers.

## **Training Opportunities for Adult Leaders**

Training is available through teacher-led classes and on-line courses. The classes are held by the Troop, the District, the Council, and the National Council.

All adults, regardless of participation level, must complete BSA Youth Protection Training within two weeks of submitting an official BSA adult volunteer application. Youth Protection and Fast Start training are available on-line at the Council's website, [www.bsa-brmc.org](http://www.bsa-brmc.org). Ideally, they both should be completed within two weeks of submitting application.



To be an officially trained adult leader, you must complete

- Fast Start Boy Scout Leader Training,
- New Leader Essentials, and
- Position Specific Training.

New Leader Essentials is an instructor-led class and should be completed within a couple of months. Position specific training (Scoutmaster, Assistant Scoutmaster, or Committee Member) should be completed as soon as possible in the first year. These are instructor-led classes. Troop committee training takes a few hours. Assistant Scoutmaster training includes one day of classroom training and a weekend of outdoors skills training. Numerous training opportunities are listed on the council website and in the district e-newsletter.

Additional training in specific skills is offered through the troop, through the district, and through the council (particularly at the annual University of Scouting). The National Council offers special training opportunities including National Camping School and the Philmont Training Center. Increasing your training enhances your Scouting experience and pays big dividends in the quality of the program delivered to the youth. The peak of adult training is Woodbadge, offered by the council annually and recommended to be taken by all adults within two years of joining.

## Fundraising

Funds are raised by the Scouts through the Council's annual popcorn sale during October. While popcorn sales support the general operation of the Troop, the cost of individual outings, including summer camp are paid by the Scout. The cost of particular outings varies, but is intended to be kept to a level that will not exclude any Scout wishing to attend. Families with special needs should see the Scoutmaster or Committee Chair.



## Prohibited

You need to know that the following are prohibited at all Boy Scout activities in accordance with National BSA requirements and youth protection guidelines:

- Alcoholic beverages.
- Illegal drugs (Includes prescriptions drugs without a valid prescription).
- Tobacco of any kind for all Scouts. *Adults are strongly discouraged from smoking or chewing tobacco. If an adult must smoke, they must never do so in the presence of youth members.*
- Any knife by youth without possession of the "Totin Chip" knife safety training.
- Weapons, firearms, sling shots, fireworks, and paint ball guns. (Rifles, BB guns, and bows and arrows are allowed when they are used with BSA qualified supervision at an approved location.)
- Pornography and other explicit adult material.

The Troop prohibits radios, audio devices, TV's, electronic games, and most electronic equipment during our meetings and outdoor activities.

It is the policy of the Boy Scouts of America that hazing, initiations, ridicule, inappropriate teasing, mental or physical abuse is prohibited. Any such conduct toward another individual will result in disciplinary action.

## Discipline

It is the responsibility of the adult leaders of the troop to ensure that all youth members experience the Scouting program in a safe environment. It is not their responsibility to teach youth the basics of self discipline and taking directions from a qualified adult. As deemed necessary and appropriate for the benefit of other Scouts and the adult leaders, parents may be requested to remove their Scout from any activity where he constitutes a hazard or threat to himself or others.

## **A Final Note**

Parents can have a tremendous impact on the success and quality of a young man's experience in Scouting. Please, check the troop website often, get involved, and support the leaders as they endeavor to provide a safe and high-quality Scouting experience for all members of the troop.

By becoming a parent of a Boy Scout, you are setting your son out on the grand adventure of Scouting. This is a tremendously important and rewarding endeavor that you will be able to share with him. The Boy Scouts of America is the largest youth oriented organization in the United States. More than 4 million boys and leaders are currently registered in the Boy Scouts of America. .

There are three aims to Scouting:

- To build character.
- To foster citizenship.
- To develop fitness

These three aims are the bedrock of the American Scouting movement. They represent the long term outcomes we want for every boy. Since 1907 in England and 1910 in the United States, these principles have been taught in an atmosphere of recreation and fun which allows young people to develop self confidence, leadership and moral character. Many American Presidents, astronauts, and leaders in business and industry are Eagle Scouts

Troop 221 has been chartered for over 50 years and has lots of experience to support you, your son, and your contribution to Scouting. Please don't hesitate to let any adult leader of the troop know how they can support you as you support your Scout and the troop.



***Welcome to our shared adventure!***