

WELCOME to Troop 31 and Scouting BSA!



We are thrilled to have you joining us in Troop 31. Whether your family is transferring from another troop, making that leap from Cub Scouts, or getting involved in Scouting for the first time - the information we've compiled here will help your transition. We'll explain "youth led," "patrol method," "blue cards," and more. Please read through it, and contact any of the Troop 31 team (listed later in this packet) with questions.

Scouting BSA's aims are to provide the opportunity for our Scouts to develop:

Character - moral strength, personal qualities, values

Citizenship - responsibilities to others, society & their governments

Fitness - physical, mental (thinking & problem solving), emotional (self-respect, self-control, courage)

Leadership - both shared and total leadership situations & understanding the concepts of leadership

A few of the means for this development are ideals captured in the **Scout Oath**, **Law** and **Motto**, the patrol method, advancement, leadership opportunities and the Scout classroom - the outdoors. Over the span of a year Scouts will have opportunities for rank advancement (Scout Skills), merit badges, community service, and putting the "outing" into Scouting (ex: Hiking, Camping, Skiing, White Water Rafting, Summer Camp...the list goes on).

The Role of the Youth

A Scout Troop is "youth led," the youth quite simply run the troop through their **Senior Patrol Leader (SPL)** and **Patrol Leaders (PL)**. The Scouts elect a new team of Patrol Leaders as well as the other leadership positions every six months. Each year in August there is an Annual Troop Planning Conference. This is where all of the Scouts meet to plan the coming Scout year. The Scouts then execute that program of activities that provides each other the opportunity to advance in rank, earn merit badges, and have fun. They provide the leaders, recognition, feedback and training that facilitate each other's success. Most importantly the older Scouts get the opportunity to make mistakes and learn from them safely. The younger Scouts get to learn followership. The Patrol leaders try to meet every other month as the **Patrol Leaders Council (PLC)** to tweak plans if needed and communicate where the members of their patrol are in regards to rank advancement.

Within each 12 month period, Scouts will plan and execute the opportunities needed for new Scouts to move up in rank. This provides the older Scouts with the leadership and instructional opportunities they need to progress through the upper ranks (**Star**, **Life** and **Eagle**). A basic fact of "youth led" is that they will do things differently and sometimes imperfectly. They get the opportunity to explore their abilities in a positive, supportive environment. Consequently, any activity may look disorganized to a

greater or lesser degree - and that is good. The Scoutmaster provides a framework and the Troop Committee are in the background observing, taking notes for discussion later and most importantly ensuring that whatever happens is safe, positive and fun.

The Role of the Adults

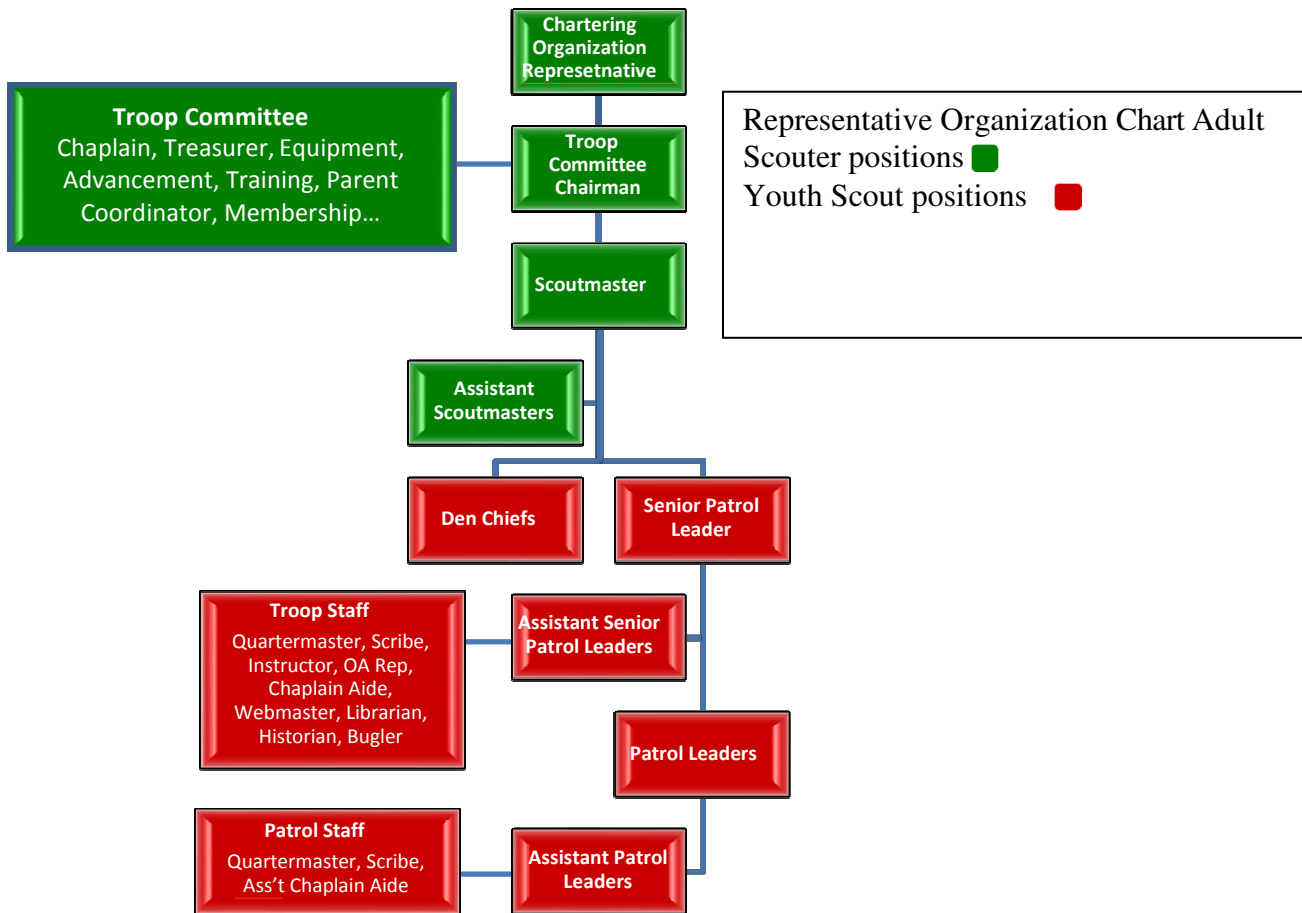
The number one requirement to make Scouting happen is robust adult support; support for everything from providing food for a Court of Honor to organizing an outing. Adult support is channeled through the **Troop Committee (TC)** in this Troop it is known as **The Gumby Patrol**. The SM and ASM's set the conditions for the Scouts' success and The Gumby's help facilitate that success by providing the resources, logistic and administrative support necessary to execute the Scouts' annual plan and keep the organizational aspects of the troop humming. All that's needed to be a part of this amazing patrol is to be a registered and trained adult. As a registered Scouter you are eligible to go on overnight campouts and other activities with the troop. We have fun in our own Patrol and take these opportunities to try new recipes etc. After three separate campouts as a Gumby you will be eligible to wear the coveted "Semper Gumby" patch on your adult uniform....oohh, aahh.

Training requirements include:

- Annual Youth Protection - No change from Cubs
- Position Specific Training
- The Troop budgets funds to assist with council training events (University of Scouting, position specific training, Wood Badge etc.).

The **Scoutmaster (SM)** and **TC** work together (as the Gumby Patrol) to facilitate that success by guiding and mentoring the Scout leaders who in turn learn to guide and mentor their peers. The challenge for the SM is protecting the environment such that the youth get to learn from their successes and mistakes with minimal adult intervention and frustration to end the fun.

"Many hands make the task easier!"



The Scout Trail

The Scout Trail begins with the joining requirements then to the first rank of **Scout** and runs through **Eagle Scout** and beyond. These requirements and the training necessary to start down the trail are captured and documented in the **Scouting BSA Handbook**. In fact, the Handbook is the source document for recording the Scout's progress and their primary resource for virtually any Scout question. Keeping their Scouting BSA Handbook in good repair, available and up to date with their accomplishments (outings, service hours, etc.) is essential to a Scout's success. Parents are encouraged to track their youths progress on Scoutbook (the link is on the last page) and will be sent an invitation to enroll once the youth has been officially registered with the troop.

Along the Scout Trail there are many opportunities for varied experiences that make each Scout's path their own. The foundation of that path, however, is found in the Scoutcraft captured in the first four ranks - **Scout, Tenderfoot, Second Class** and **First Class**.

ADVANCEMENT - Specific requirements are covered at length in the Scouting BSA Handbook. In

general though, the focus of the early ranks is on followership and skill development. The upper ranks focus on leadership, mentoring, instruction and merit badges. First Class is the rank that bridges the followership/leadership divide.

While each Scout's Trail is their own - to travel at their own pace, the Troop's goal is to have each new Scout meet the joining requirements and advance to Scout rank within one month of joining the troop; and then to have the opportunities needed to earn First Class when they are ready. It is Scouting BSA's goal for every Scout to at least reach First Class. We know all youth progress through rank at their own pace and may have something else going on that may slow them down and the Scouters will assist them as needed. All of the knowledge necessary to achieve these benchmarks is available within the covers of the Scout Handbook and with the help of the Scout's Patrol Leader or Troop Guide. The Handbook and Patrol Leader are essential resources throughout a Scout's journey. Participation is key to advancement, particularly campouts and summer camp.

The Scout should also have self-ownership for advancement by having good attendance, prepping themselves and asking their PL's to test them when needed. As a parent your role in advancement is ENCOURAGEMENT and some limited sign-off authority (Family Life Merit Badge, at-home discussion like Child Abuse pamphlet).

MERIT BADGES - No merit badges are required for the first four ranks. They aren't discouraged, but they are secondary to skill development. Most Scouts' are motivated to try at least a few merit badges. This is where "blue cards" (the merit badge application) come into play. Signed by the Scoutmaster to start and complete the merit badge, the "blue card" is the formal record of a Scout's merit badge effort. All activity to complete the badge is between the **Merit Badge Counselor (MBC)** and the Scout. Once the requirements are complete to the satisfaction of the MBC, the counselor and then the SM sign the card which the Scout returns to the Advancement coordinator. Merit badges are given to the Scout as soon as it is earned or at the next meeting if needed, all youth are recognized for each badge earned at the Bi-annual Court of Honor's.

In both advancement and the merit badge activities, there is no latitude with requirements; neither the SM nor MBC have the latitude to waive, change or add requirements. The Scout must meet the requirements as spelled out in the Scouting BSA Handbook or merit badge requirements booklet. Youth with physical disabilities and youth and adults with developmental or cognitive challenges are welcome in Scouting and various accommodations exist to facilitate advancement. The "**Guide to Advancement**" will assist in determining how to formally request for accommodations with

advancement and Merit Badge requirements. You can access this guide on the Scouting BSA website at this link: <https://www.scouting.org/resources/guide-to-advancement/special-needs/>

The Role of the Scout

As a Scout, the individual is responsible to themselves and their Patrol for all aspects of their activities from attendance through advancement. Even as a new Scout, they will be expected to assume responsibilities for the Patrol - whether as grub master, honor guard, or cleaning detail. Being a small troop the leadership positions may be assumed by lower ranked youth as opposed to waiting to them to reach the First Class Rank. At all times a Scout is expected to live according to the Scout Oath, Law and Motto and wear their uniform properly and proudly when at Scouting events, to include meetings. Likewise, rank and merit badge requirements are the youth's responsibility, with assistance available through the troop if they ask. The Troop Guide, Troop Instructor, Patrol Leader, even Senior Patrol Leader are available during meetings and willing to help, whether it is a question about blue cards or signing off a rank requirement - they have the answer, or know where to get it. In very rare occasions the Scoutmaster Team is also available - but only after all youth resources are exhausted.

The Role of the Parent

Parental participation, enthusiasm, encouragement, and support are vital to a Scout's success. Encouraging your Scout to use their resources in their Scouting BSA Handbook, the Troop web page, their Patrol Leader and Senior Patrol Leader is an important first step in the character building that is one of the Aims of Scouting. "What's your Handbook or Patrol Leader say about that?" may become a reflexive response in time! For our WEBELO families, you'll find that you are no longer AKELA (for Scouts at least). With very few exceptions, parents do not sign off requirements (the pamphlet exercise for the joining requirements being one notable exception).

If you camp with the troop, which is always welcome and encouraged, the biggest adjustment for Scout and parent is that you are not there as a parent. The adults camp separately from the youth. They provide logistical support to the Scouts' planned activities for that outing. As with many things Scout led, chaos may seem to dominate but within that chaos are invaluable education and growth opportunities! That being said - safety is key to all we do. If you have any concerns about any activities, questions are always welcome.

Funding

Each year we have an Annual requirements-based budget that is approved by the Troop Committee.

There is a three pronged approach to keeping our budget funded: Modest dues, grants from non-profit organizations and an annual fundraiser (Music by the Bay - MBB).

- *Dues: \$1/week dues for Scouts (paid in lump sum yearly). There is a yearly registration fee set by the Council that is required for both Scouts and Scouters.
- “Profit Sharing” from MBB proceeds-we keep a weekly log of who attends and participates in the weekly event and divide the proceeds up appropriately

We also keep provisions in place for families in financial distress, we have a uniform exchange closet where donated pants and t-shirts are kept available and keep money in the budget to assist with events as/if needed.

Recruiting

We have discovered over the years that Scouts are the best recruiters. That is part of why uniforms at events is important, when other youth see the uniforms and the Scouts having fun they will develop interest. We have also had great luck with our presence at MBB each week during the summer and being present at different Cub Scout events like “Weblore”. The Troop has a website as well that is open to view of the public and we try to keep pictures current to show the fun the youth continue to have each year.

Troop Bylaws

Please know we are all volunteers who want and enjoy working with the Scouts. But being in a transient community there is always a chance that the SM, ASM’s or Committee Members will change. To ensure that we are able to maintain consistency in the running of the Troop there are Bylaws in place which can be viewed on the Troop 31 website (link on last page). The bylaws cover everything from membership to uniforms to Council contact information. All parents, Scouts and Scouters are encouraged to be familiar with the bylaws.

Community Service

Part of being in Scouts is to perform different forms of community service, this is detailed in each rank and or merit badge requirement. One opportunity that the Troop provides each year is our annual Stocking Stuffer for the VA Hospital. We collect donations throughout the year of different items to place in the stockings of the residents on the Spinal Cord Unit where the Scouts hand them out. This is a great opportunity to give back to our Veterans and for the Scouts to get to meet and talk with them. Please feel free to speak to any of the members of the Committee to see what we need, donations are always needed and we have learned it’s easier to do it in small amounts during the year

instead of asking for a large amount during the holidays. Other Community Service projects are usually available throughout the year and the youth are encouraged to participate in other projects on their own with SM approval to meet the requirements necessary for each rank/merit badge.



Additional Resources

This booklet is simply an introduction to Scouting BSA we can't hope to answer all of your questions here, so we will have other opportunities to discuss specific topics (outdoor gear is always popular). However, the COR, a Committee member or the Scoutmaster is always available for questions - don't hesitate to ask.

Troop Website: <http://troop31moatmonsters.org> (annual calendar, troop bylaws and other resources avail)

Additional links:

<https://www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/ahmr/> (health forms, required yearly, we'll give details in person)

<https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/34283.pdf> (uniform inspection sheet, shows patch placement)

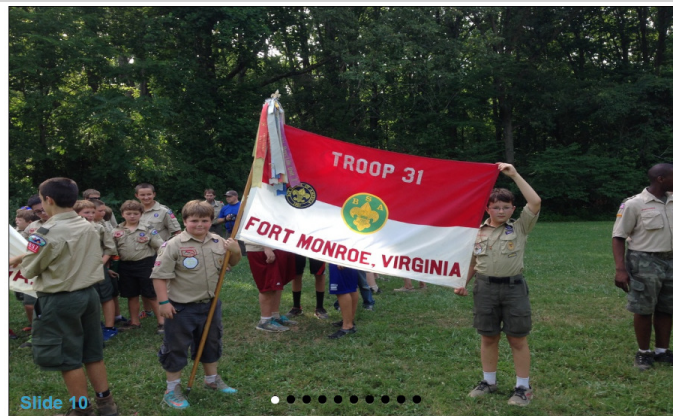
<http://www.scouting.org/> (official BSA web site)

<http://www.scoutstuff.org/> (on-line Scout store)

<http://www.boyscouttrail.com/> (unofficial Scouting aid)

<http://usscouts.org/> (explore this site!)

<https://www.scoutbook.com/> (here you can track your Scouts progress)



MEETINGS

Meetings are every Thursday evening from 7:00pm-8:30pm. Meetings are held in the Chapel of the Centurion Chapel Annex inside the Fortress Monroe. Address is 54 Bernard Road, Fort Monroe, VA 23651 (see attached map below).

For more info E-mail: troop31sm@gmail.com

