

This booklet has been prepared in an effort to help introduce new members (and their families) to Boy Scout Troop 205. Care has been taken to anticipate questions and provide an effective source of answers and basic information. The adult leaders of the troop recognize the importance of helping new Scouts understand the basic nature of the Scout Program and of becoming familiar with the operation of Troop 205. They stand ready to be of any assistance should a question arise. Please take the time to read this introductory booklet carefully. And feel free to contact any troop leader with questions.

On behalf of everyone associated with Troop 205:

## **Welcome to the wonderful world of Scouting!**

BSA Troop 205  
Kalamazoo, Michigan

Sponsored by First Presbyterian Church  
Founded 1916

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## **BSA Overview**

Adventure! That's what Scouting is. You are standing at the doorway to the most exciting adventures you can imagine. Step into the world of Scouting and you'll find yourself hiking along trails, canoeing across misty lakes, and camping under open sky. Smell the fresh rain in the woods, plunge into a mountain lake, travel the backcountry without leaving a trace and learn to rely on your skills in the outdoors. Scouting is also a doorway to friendship. Scouting is a worldwide brotherhood many millions strong. Outdoor adventures, service projects, leadership in your patrol and troop – Scouting will give you experiences and responsibilities that will help you grow. Welcome to Scouting.

From: The Boy Scout Handbook

## **Troop 205 Overview**

Boy Scout Troop 205 is the oldest troop in Southwest Michigan, having first met at the First Presbyterian Church in Kalamazoo in 1916. Troop 205 is also one of the largest troops in the area. Through the years, advancement, community service and high adventure trips have been given a high priority status.

On average, one in every ten Troop 205 Scouts achieves the rank of Eagle Scout, Scouting's highest rank. Compare this with the national average of only one in fifty Scouts completing the requirements to become an Eagle Scout, and you'll quickly see why Troop 205 is extremely proud of its record.

The average tenure of a Troop 205 Scout is five years, however, many Scouts remain active for many more years, often going on to assume adult leadership roles within the Troop. These experienced Scouters, with additional parent and community adults have worked with our Scouts to produce a quality program that includes at least two major travel experience opportunities each year.

Travel experiences of the past have included: rafting the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon, backpacking in the Grand Teton National Park, biking through Yosemite National Park, sailing in the Bahamas, and canoeing in Maine. Also important to the Troop 205 program are frequent visits to the National Boy Scout High Adventure Bases; Philmont in New Mexico and Boundary waters in Minnesota.

The long and exciting history of Boy Scout Troop 205 is a credit to all those who have gone before, and provides a basis for continued rewarding experiences for the future.

## **Joining Requirements**

The following are to be completed before joining Troop 205:

- Submit a completed Boy Scout application, signed by your parent or guardian.
- Submit a health history signed by your parent or guardian.
- Pay dues.

## **Dues, costs:**

Dues are collected each year in September and January, as established by the Troop Committee, to cover many Troop expenses including awards, insurance, Boys Life, BSA registration, a variety of local campouts, and other misc. items. *To keep dues reasonable, participation in the fund raising is required by each family.*

2005-06 Dues                    · \$40 September 15                    · \$40 January 15

Costs for campouts and other outings are determined based on how many people participate. The Troop makes every effort to keep costs as low as possible so that as many boys as possible can participate. The Troop has its own bus, sixteen passenger van, pickup truck, equipment trailer, and camping equipment (tents, cooking, etc.) to help keep costs down. On overnight trips not involving camping, we try to sleep free in armories, military bases and church basements whenever possible. Weekend trips are generally \$15-30. For larger trips, financial assistance is available if needed.

## **Scout Uniform:**

Troop 205 uses the official BSA uniform which is available at *Lee's Fun and Adventure, Boy Scout Service Center* on Maple Street, and through the *Sears and Penny's* Catalogs. Class B shirts and a variety of used uniform pieces are available through the Troop. Parents are encouraged to donate to the shop as boys outgrow their shirts and pants.

Standard Uniform: short sleeve shirt with collar, troop Class B shirt, long pants, brown shoes or boots with dark or scout socks. The merit badge sash is worn only at the Court of Honor or other formal ceremonies. No neckerchief or hat is worn.

Summer Uniform: scout shorts, troop Class B shirts, scout or dark socks, and dark shoes or boots.

## **Scout Handbook:**

*If your son is a Cub Scout who will be "crossing over" from Webelos, we would like to send a representative to his crossing over ceremony and present him with his Boy Scout Handbook. Just let us know when and where.*

The Troop will provide one handbook for each new Scout. Information in the handbook is very useful to both parents and Scouts and should be read carefully. Scouts should bring the handbooks to meetings and outings where they can work on advancement. The handbook is the Scout's record for all advancement. Therefore, the Scout's name should be written in the handbook as soon as it is received.

## **Troop Organization:**

The troop is organized into the following groups of people:

1. The Troop Committee consists of parents and adults who set policy for the Troop.
2. The Adult Staff – Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmasters.
3. The Senior Staff – older scouts who assist with the leadership of the troop.
4. The Patrol Leadership Council (PLC) – the Senior Patrol Leaders and Patrol Leaders of the Troop.
5. The Patrols – generally 6-8 scouts per patrol.

## **Troop Meetings:**

Troop 205 holds a regular meeting in the lower level of the First Presbyterian Church, 321 W. South Street, every Monday night from September to June unless announced otherwise. The meetings begin promptly at 7:15 and are generally over at 8:30. Scouts should plan on arriving about 7:00 to take care of advancement, signing up for camping trips, getting questions answered, etc.

A normal Troop meeting consists of:

1. Opening
2. Announcements
3. Program (Scouting skills, etc.)
4. Closing and final announcements

## **Troop 205 Activities:**

Most major Troop activities are planned far in advance and dates published in a yearly calendar and in the monthly Troop newsletter. Please keep track of key dates to avoid conflicts. The Troop depends on parent support to see to it that scouts attend most Troop Activities. Equipment lists, costs, departure and pick up times are also published in the Newsletter. The monthly newsletter, available in print at meetings as well as on the web site, is our primary means of communication and should be read by both Scout and parents! Handouts at meetings may supplement the monthly newsletter.

Campouts and other activities are scheduled frequently through the year. The centerpiece of each year is the High Adventure Expedition that is scheduled each summer (usually in mid July). In 2006 this Expedition will be to the Philmont Boy Scout Reserve in New Mexico. Other trips have included canoeing in Maine, Boundary waters in Minnesota, Gettysburg and Civil War sites, and the Grand Canyon.

The Troop also tries to sponsor a camping trip each summer for Scouts not attending the High Adventure. In the past this has included Northern Michigan, white water rafting in West Virginia, and camping at South Manitou Island or in Indiana caves.

## **Equipment:**

Over the years, hundreds of hours of hard work have gone into buying and building the Troop Equipment Inventory. We have thousands of dollars invested in tents, grills, cook kits, utensils, lanterns, axes, saws, water carriers, etc. Most of this is stored at the church or in our storage barn on Lake Street. Treating the equipment with care ensures it will be available for future outings.

The Troop also owns and operates its own bus, van, truck, and trailer. The truck and trailer are used for efficient transport of equipment while the bus and van will carry up to 58 passengers on trips. These vehicles were purchased by past families of Troop 205 Scouts. The capital fund is administered by the Troop 205 Parent Committee for expenses for the operation, maintenance, and replacement of equipment as needed.

## **Discipline:**

It is easy to become a Scout, but it isn't easy to be one. Scouting has rules that must be followed to be a member of the team. The rules of Scouting are found in the Scout Oath or Promise, Scout Law, Scout Motto, and Scout Slogan. Scouts in Troop 205 are expected to follow these rules to the best of their ability. Self control and self discipline are attributes expected from all Scouts in Troop 205. There are, however, times that the Scoutmaster(s) must use disciplinary action to ensure the health and welfare of all Troop members. Discipline may also be necessary for the effective operation of a coherent scouting program.

Discipline and control will be treated as an individual matter, realizing the best discipline is preventive in nature rather than regulatory and restrictive. Scouts will receive positive reinforcement (praise) when exhibiting appropriate behaviors. The Scoutmaster(s) will ultimately be responsible for the proper behavior of Troop members and therefore will be expected to enforce a fair and consistent disciplinary plan.

The following disciplinary steps shall be used by Troop 205 Leadership:

1. Personal Conference with the Scoutmaster(s).
2. Letter to parents regarding the behavior and action taken, asking for parent cooperation, and notice of next steps.
3. Disciplinary Conference with the Scout, his parents, Scoutmaster(s), and a representative of the Troop Committee. Disciplinary action may include probation, restriction from activities, service projects, reimbursement for damages, etc.
4. Termination Request: With the approval of the Troop Committee, the Scout may be asked to reconsider his goals and no longer participate in Troop 205 activities.
5. Severe Clause: Any behavior that directly affects the health or welfare of self or others would automatically place a Scout on step #3 of this plan. This clause is meant for alcohol, drugs, firearms, other weapons, and the threat or use of physical violence to self or others.
6. Trip Clause: At any time a Scout is participating in a Troop 205 sponsored trip or High Adventure Program he is automatically governed by the rules of the Troop 205 High Adventure Policy.

### **Active Participation:**

Scouts in Troop 205 are encouraged to regularly attend Troop Camps and trips, good turn projects, as well as Monday night meetings. Participation in summer camp is usually a requirement for going on the High Adventure trip that will be held later that summer. We realize Scouts and their families are busy with many activities; these may make it difficult for a Scout to attend every meeting, outing, and trip. However, regular active participation will enhance the Scout's enjoyment and growth in the program.

### **Advancement (The Trail to Eagle Scout):**

Advancement from the Tenderfoot Award to Eagle is an important part of the Scouting Program and is explained in the Scout Handbook. It is important each Scout keep his own record in the area provided in the Handbook. He should bring his book along on camps and meetings where advancement will take place. Also, paper and pencil are good to have along.

Whenever a Scout passes part of his rank, he should make sure he gets his book initialed by the leader or Senior Scout who passes him. In general, parents should not pass their sons on advancement. Whenever a Merit badge or rank advancement is completed, proof must be presented to the Advancement Chairman. The Troop Advancement Chairman maintains records of Scout advancement, leader registration, and available merit badge counselors. Parents are encouraged to share their skills by becoming merit badge counselors.

If the Scout has any question about his advancement, he should contact an adult leader. As each Scout progresses on the Trail of the Eagle, he will be required to participate in Troop Leadership and Community Service activities. These opportunities are frequently announced at Troop meetings or in the newsletter. Contact an Assistant Scoutmaster or Scoutmaster for assistance in Leadership and community service projects.

### **Court of Honor:**

The Scout will receive his ranks and merit badges as he earns them. Additionally, the Troop schedules two Courts of Honor each year, one in the fall and one in the spring. At these Courts of Honor, each Scout is given recognition for his advancement within the Troop. Even if your Scout has not earned a major rank, we urge the whole family to attend each Court of Honor. Many announcements are made at each Court.

## **High Adventure Policy:**

High adventure trips are subject to limits in the number and age of participants. They may require special training sessions prior to the trip. A Scout must fill out a Troop 205 High Adventure Application and return it to the finance table. Parents are encouraged to attend these trips to enjoy a unique experience and to help supervise the Scouts. Scouts will be selected for High Adventure Trips based upon their age, experience, attitude, rank, and ability to follow the Scout Oath and Law in their daily lives.

1. After selection, each Scout will be expected to attend all training sessions in preparation for the planned expedition.
2. Scouts are expected to display good conduct at all times during the High Adventure Trip.
3. Before each High Adventure Trip, Scouts and parents will be required to sign a form indicating that they understand the trip rules and requirements.

## **Parent Support**

A key element in maintaining and improving the quality of the Troop 205 program is active parent support. To be successful, Scouting must become, to a certain extent, a family program and activity. Ideally, parent support does not just consist of driving your son to a Troop Meeting and picking him up. Parents can get further involved:

1. Make sure your son attends all activities and is ready for them.
2. Encourage your son in his Scouting Advancement.
3. Attend the Courts of Honor, Parent Meetings, and trips such as Family Camp in June.
4. Join the Troop Committee. This group meets monthly to set policy for the Troop and assist the Troop leadership.
5. Become a Merit Badge Counselor for the Troop. You don't have to be an expert – your knowledge based on hobbies, employment, etc. will all be helpful.
6. Support fund raising in the troop.
7. Become an Assistant Scoutmaster if your talents include leading and guiding young men.

## **Fund Raising:**

The troop organizes one fund raising event each year. All families are required to meet a minimum sales quota or accept the minimum buy-out.

In 2005, the organized fund raiser is the popular holiday wreath. A portion of the proceeds from each wreath sold is returned to the Scout for use in paying for High Adventure Trips. Remaining profits are used by the troop to cover expenses (insurance for vehicles, maintenance, trips, equipment, etc.)

## **Conclusion:**

This booklet is meant to give you an overview of Troop 205. If you have questions not covered here, please feel free to ask any parent, committee member, Scoutmaster or Scout. Troop 205 will continue to provide the quality program for our young men only with everyone's involvement.