

BSA Troop 31

2002 Handbook



Sponsored by

Union Presbyterian Church

858 University Ave, Los Altos, CA

www.troop31.org

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WELCOME TO TROOP 31!

This handbook is a quick reference guide to Troop 31. After reading this booklet please do not hesitate to contact any member or leader of Troop 31 for more information. Please refer to the adult leader and committee member section of this document for all contact information. Interested boys and their parents are invited to visit us during our Wednesday weekly meetings and attend one of our outings.

Troop 31 was founded by our chartering organization, the Union Presbyterian Church on University Avenue in Los Altos, in May 1958.

Troop 31's program is based on the premise that robust Scouting activities are the best way to develop a Scout's character and self-confidence while preparing him for adulthood. Our program places equal emphasis on advancement through the Scouting ranks and outings, which are fun for both Scouts and adults. Our weekly troop meeting and monthly outings are always constructive activities aimed at both advancement and fun. We use the Patrol Method of leadership, which gives Scouts of all ages the opportunity to develop leadership skills as they advance through the Scouting ranks.

Troop 31 is not a large troop. Our target is to have between 40 and 60 active Scouts ranging in age from 11 to 17. This size is large enough to support a rich Scouting program, but small enough for close fellowship - everyone knows each other well and the environment is friendly.

Troop 31 is fortunate to have a number of Assistant Scoutmasters, many who are Eagle Scouts and have even served as past Scoutmasters. Some of the Assistant Scoutmasters have been with the Troop for years, providing continuity for the Scouts, while others have recently joined, injecting fresh energy and leadership into the Troop. Our troop has grown rapidly over the past couple of years, prompted by strong interest from the Webelos and Cub Scouts packs in the community. In the Fall of 2001, we trained several new Assistant Scoutmasters and several merit badge counselors, and this progress continues.

It is important for parents to take an active role in the troop's activities. Each family is asked to help plan and coordinate one outing each year or be assigned to a troop committee role. Adult leadership positions are open for anyone who wants to be even more active. We have several committed parents and leaders to help shoulder tasks such as publicity, recruitment, outings coordination and fund raising. Participation in the monthly Troop Committee meeting by all parents is encouraged. As with most volunteer activities, more people pitching in means we can offer a more robust program and have more fun, too.

The Troop is financed by a \$50 annual dues and in some years by an outside fundraising. Outing expenses are shared equally by the attendees.

All Scouts are expected to help each year with Scout Sunday, Scouting for Food, Scout-0-Rama, and three work parties for our chartering organization, Union Presbyterian Church. Communications are handled through a monthly emailed newsletter, via printed flyers before each outing, and by a troop home page on the World Wide Web designed and built by a Scout.

We are looking forward to a great year! Please join us.

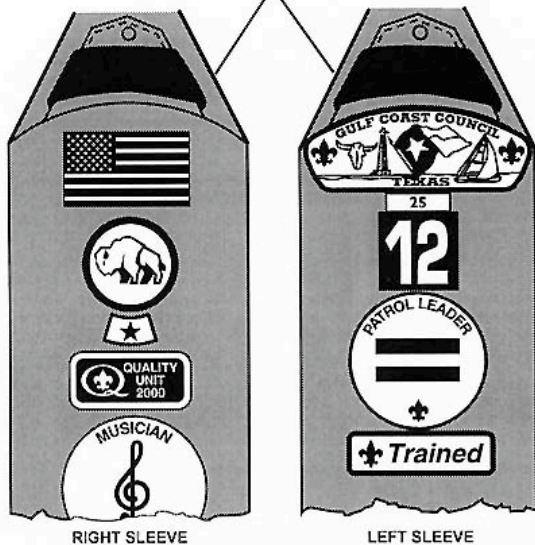
JOHN KAUMEYER
SCOUTMASTER

TBD
COMMITTEE CHARIMAN

Scouting Uniform

BOY SCOUT/VARSITY SCOUT UNIFORM INSPECTION SHEET OFFICIAL PLACEMENT OF INSIGNIA

SHOULDER EPAULETS
AND LOOPS



RIGHT SLEEVE

LEFT SLEEVE

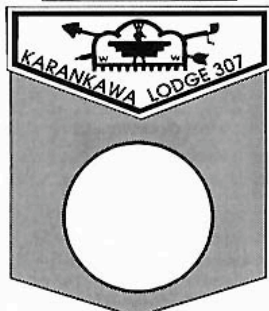


JEFFREY BROWN

VENTURE

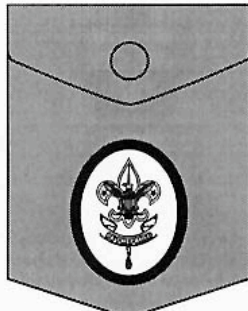
FRANÇAIS

BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA



RECRUITER

RIGHT POCKET



NAMEPLATE

LEFT POCKET

Conduct uniform inspection with common sense; the basic rule is neatness.

Merit Badge Sash. If worn, merit badges are attached to front (and back, if needed) of sash. Venture/Varsity letter is attached at bottom front corner. Temporary insignia may be worn on back.

Shoulder Epaulets. Red shoulder loops identify Boy Scouting (all members of a troop). Blaze (orange) loops identify Varsity Scouting.

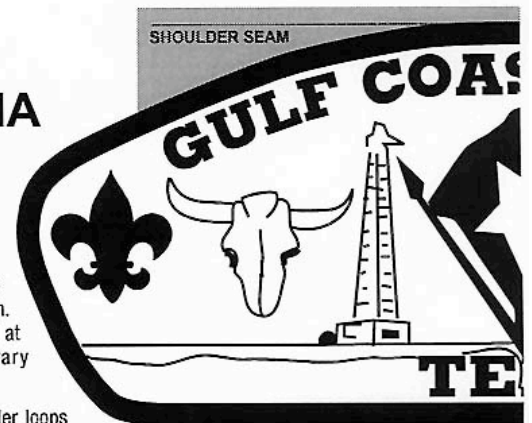
Left Sleeve. Council patches, unit numeral, and badge of office are worn as shown snug up, and touching each other. Badge of office is centered below and touches unit numeral. The veteran unit bar (25, 50, 55, 60, 65, 70, 75, or 80 years) is positioned above and touching troop numeral and in turn touching council patch. Den chief cord is worn over the left shoulder and under epaulet.

Left Pocket. Service stars above the pocket. If a medal or embroidered knot for youth members is worn, service stars are raised. Embroidered square knots are worn centered above the pocket in rows of three. Not more than five medals may be worn, pinned centered immediately above the pocket (extending over knots if both are worn). The wearing sequence for knots or medals is at the wearer's discretion and lead color is to the wearer's right. Badges of rank are worn centered on the pocket above the Arrow of Light Award. Flap buttoned. The World Crest is worn centered horizontally over the left pocket and vertically between the left shoulder seam and the top of the pocket.

Right Sleeve. U.S. flag. Only the most recently earned Quality Unit Award may be worn below patrol emblem or below National Honor Patrol star. Musician badge, if in band or drum corps, is worn 1/2 inch below patrol emblem. Up to six merit badges may be worn on the long-sleeve shirt in two columns of three starting 3 inches above the bottom edge of the cuff.

Right Pocket. Jamboree insignia (only one) worn above BSA or interpreter strip. Order of the Arrow lodge insignia worn on pocket flap. Temporary insignia worn centered on the pocket. Flap buttoned. The Varsity or Venture strip is worn above the BSA strip or above the interpreter strip. Nameplate, if worn, is centered above the BSA strip, interpreter strip, and Venture or Varsity strip.

SHOULDER SEAM



Position above diagram on left sleeve to guide you on proper placement of insignia.



The Scouting Seal Is Your Guarantee of Quality, Excellence, and Performance.

OVER

**BOY SCOUT/VARSITY SCOUT
UNIFORM INSPECTION SHEET**

General Appearance. Allow 4 points for each: (1) good posture, (2) clean face and hands, (3) hair combed, (4) neatly dressed, (5) clean fingernails.
20 pts.

Headgear. Two styles: (1) visored cap; or (2) campaign hat. All troop members must wear one of the headgear chosen by vote of the troop/team. Varsity Scouts wear only the blaze and brown visored cap.
5 pts.

Neckerchief and Slide. Insignia at back should be right side up and centered. Fold long edge over several flat folds to about 6 inches from tip of neckerchief. A tight fold prevents gathering around the neck and is more efficient than rolling or twirling. Draw neckerchief slide over ends and adjust to fit snugly. By vote of troop, ends may be left hanging loose or tied in a slip-knot. The neckerchief is optional to the troop.
5 pts.

Shirt. Official long- or short-sleeve tan shirt with red or blaze orange shoulder loops on epaulets. The troop/team may vote to wear a neckerchief, bolo tie, or no neckwear. In any case, the collar should be unbuttoned. The troop/team has the choice of wearing the neckerchief over the turned-under collar or under the open collar.
15 pts.

Belt. Olive web with BSA insignia on brass buckle; or official leather with international-style buckle or buckle of your choice, worn only if voted by the troop/team. Members wear one of the belts chosen by vote of the troop/team.
5 pts.

Pants/Shorts. Official, olive, pressed; no cuffs.
15 pts.

Socks. Official olive-colored mid-calf-length socks with red tops worn with official shorts or trousers. (Long socks are optional with shorts.)
5 pts.

Shoes. Leather or canvas, neat and clean.
5 pts.

Registration. Current membership card or temporary certificate on person.
5 pts.

Insignia. Correct placement left pocket, 5 points; right pocket, 5 points; left sleeve, 5 points; right sleeve, 5 points.
20 pts.

| | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| UNIFORM POINTS | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| INSIGNIA POINTS | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| TOTAL POINTS | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>PERFECT SCORE 100 POINTS</i> | |



For more information about insignia, see *Insignia Guide*, No. 33066B.

UNIFORM INSPECTION SCORE

Name _____ Troop/Team No. _____

#34283

Patrol/Squad _____



34283
2000 BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

OUR UNIT INSPECTION
WILL BE HELD ON

BRING THIS FORM
WITH YOU

OVER

Uniform and Equipment List

Scout Uniform (required):

Scout Shirt, long or short sleeves
Patches-Pacific Skyline Council, Troop 31 numerals, American
Flag, Patrol, Rank, Arrow of Light (graduated Webelos)
Red Epaulettes (shoulder loops)
Scout Pants, long or short with Scout socks
Scout Belt
Scout Hat
Scout Bolo Tie* (provided by the Troop)
Scout Merit Badge Sash*

* for full dress occasions

Gear (needed during the first year):

Scouting Handbook (provided by the Troop)
Ten Essentials Kit - clothing, extra food, water bottle/water purification tablets/water,
flashlight, waterproof matches, fire starter, first aid kit (including moleskin, insect
repellent, sunscreen and lip balm), pocket knife, nylon cord, compass, and whistle. Trip
map.
Hiking Boots and socks
Sleeping Bag, lightweight, rated for 15 degrees or lower
Sleeping Pad
Backpack and cover (can be plastic bag)
Ground Tarp/Space Blanket
Rain gear
Cup, plate, fork, spoon
Fuel bottle

Additional Gear (accumulated by most serious Scouts):

Tent, light weight, 2 or 3 person
Backpacking stove plus normal car camping stove
Cook kit - pot, frying pan, cooking spoon, spatula

A "Trip Sheet" with need to know information and a "What to Bring" check list including clothing and food are provided for every outing.

Where to Buy Scouting Uniform and Gear

There are two local outlets which offer Scout clothing, equipment, books, and supplies. Location maps and phone numbers are included on the following pages.

Palo Alto Scout Service Center located at 1305 Middlefield Rd. It is run by Pacific Skyline Council, which is our council. It is located in the Lucy Stern Center just north of Embarcadero Rd.

Santa Clara County Council office located on 970 West Julian Ave., in San Jose. This shop is larger and generally better stocked than the store in Palo Alto.

You can also order Scout supplies and equipment by mail order from the BSA Supply Division at 800-323-0732.

Troop 31 Adult Scouting Leaders

| | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|----------------------|----------------|
| Scoutmaster | John Kaumeyer | jkaumeyer@batnet.com | (650) 219-3231 |
| New Scout Assistant Scoutmaster | Sean Kelly | sean_kelly@hp.com | (650) 9693788 |
| New Scout Assistant Scoutmaster | Bill Gascoyne | gascan@lsil.com | (408) 298-3020 |
| Mid Scout Assistant Scoutmaster | Artie Chang | artiechang@yahoo.com | (650) 964-5506 |
| Eagle Rank Assistant Scoutmaster | Artie Chang | artiechang@yahoo.com | (650) 964-5506 |
| Venture Patrol Assistant Scoutmaster | Ted Elms | ted_elms@avanex.com | (650) 948-7082 |
| Venture Patrol Assistant Scoutmaster | Ron Ibaraki | ribaraki@pacbell.net | (650) 968-4211 |

Troop 31 Committee Members:

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|--|--------------|
| Unit Commissioner | John Miller | | 650/941-3091 |
| Church Scouting Coordinator | Joanne Donovan | joanne@joannedonovan.com | 650/988-1567 |
| Chairman | TBD | | 650/967-5255 |
| Assistant Chairman | Jack Kelly | | 650/964-2908 |
| Treasurer | Nancy Hughes | hhughes558@aol.com | 650/941-2942 |
| Newsletter/Secretary | Debbie Skelton | | 650/968-5810 |
| Outings | Bob Hoyer | RHoyerJR@aol.com | 650/949-3517 |
| Charter Renewal | Nancy Hughes | hhughes558@aol.com | 650/941-2942 |
| Recruiting | Linda Lounsbury | | 650/965-3652 |
| Advancement | Ted Elms | | 650/948-7082 |
| Trek Coordinator | John Hayman | | 650/941-7956 |
| Scouting for Food | TBD | | 650/938-2991 |
| Friends of Scouting | Dave Woods | | 650/961-2301 |
| Scout-0-Rama | Bill Gascoyne | gascan@lsil.com | 408/298-3020 |
| Leader Training | Paul Ralston | | 650/948-4112 |
| Summer Programs | Linda Puri | Lisawpuri@ewpaia.com | 650/968-4211 |
| Scout Sunday | Frankie Lee | | 650/949-4755 |
| Medical Forms | Denise Murata | dmurata@pacbell.net | 650/964-4545 |

Troop Policies

A goal of Troop 31 is to ensure that every Scout has fun while he advances through the ranks of Scouting. In order to do this it is essential that certain guidelines are followed.

Attendance: Scouts are expected to attend most meetings and outings. Regular attendance will enable the Scout to advance at a steady rate and will help him become an integral part of the troop. To encourage regular attendance, eligibility for a quarterly adventure night is tied to attendance record, uniform standards and behavior.

Uniforms: Troop 31 has a Uniform Dress Code for meetings. Full dress uniform (including Scout shirt, bolo tie, hat, shorts or long pants, belt and socks) is expected at weekly meetings, special events and when attending Camp Oljato. Uniforms should be worn with pride; shirttails in, hats straight, etc. The Troop provides a class B (T-shirt) uniform for the Scouts.

Conduct: Good conduct is essential for a successful meeting or outing. Scouts should strive to follow the rules of Scouting which are found in the Scout Oath, Scout Law, Scout Motto and Scout Slogan. Respect for each other, for the Scout leaders and for the adult leaders of the troop is essential for a well-run troop.

Safe Scouting: Troop 31 carefully follows the policies and procedures detailed in the BSA "Guide to Safe Scouting" (a copy is available for every family). Alcoholic beverages are not permitted at any Troop 31 activity.

Friends on Outings: Friends are permitted on specified outings providing formal permission has been obtained from the Scoutmaster in advance. Parent or legal guardian of friends under 18 must have completed an "Authorization and Consent to Minor" form. Female friends are welcome as long as they are accompanied by a parent/legal guardian or there is an adult female leader present at the event.

Radios, etc.: Radios, tape players, MP3 players, video games, etc. are not permitted at meetings and, with rare exception, are not permitted on outings, but can be used while traveling to outings at the driver's discretion.

Animals on Outings: Animals (dogs generally) must be cleared by the outing coordinator for that specific outing before being permitted.

Cigarette lighters are not permitted on outings or at meetings.

Discipline: Unsafe or grossly disruptive behavior will not be tolerated and may lead to discipline. At each meeting/outing an Assistant Scoutmaster is designated disciplinarian. The escalation sequence is: 1) Scout is asked to stop by leader, 2) Scout is pulled aside and counseled by disciplinarian, 3) Scout's parents are called and asked to take Scout home. Advancement can also be impeded because disruptive behavior is not consistent with good Scout spirit, a requirement for advancement.

Troop Meeting Format

| | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|------|
| Opening Ceremony & Announcements | | 7:30 |
| Patrol Meetings | | 7:45 |
| Skills Training | Merit Badge Instruction | 8:00 |
| Patrol Challenge | | 8:30 |
| Closing Ceremony & Announcements | | 8:45 |
| Troop Game | Scoutmaster Conferences | 8:50 |
| Meeting Adjourned | | 9:00 |

- Activities are planned for Scouts of all levels. They include learning advancement requirements, merit badge classes and outing planning.
- Campout specific time (to make food groups) may be required before or after standard meeting times.
- Venture Patrol time may be required before or after standard meeting times.

Monthly Standing Calendar

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Troop meetings | Wed., 7:30pm - 9:00pm |
| Committee meetings | Second Tues. of the month, 7:30pm -9:00pm |
| Patrol Leader Council Meetings | Second Thurs. of the month, 8:30pm -9:00pm |
| Scoutmaster Round Tables | First Thurs. of the month |
| Outings | Monthly |

Annual Standing Calendar

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Courts of Award | Next to last Wed.; Jan., May and Sept., 7:30-9:00 |
| Scout Sunday | February, second Sunday |
| Scouting for Food | November |
| Adventure Night | March and September |
| Troop elections | March and September |
| Annual Planning Meeting | May |
| Scout-0-Rama | May |
| Summer Camp | July |
| Annual Trek | August |
| Webelos Night | November |

Troop Organization

Troop 31 has been sponsored by Union Presbyterian Church since 1958. The church provides the facility (Bailey Hall) which we meet in weekly. As the sponsoring organization, UPC provides a representative who interfaces directly with the troop, and approves the selection of all adult leaders.

The main parent organization supporting the troop is the Troop Committee. This committee is responsible for organizing many of the support services needed to keep the troop operating smoothly. Troop 31's committee includes a Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, Outings Coordinator, and Advancement Coordinator.

The adults responsible for interacting directly with the Scouts on a weekly basis are the Scoutmasters. Troop 31 currently has a total of six Assistant Scoutmasters (ASMs) who are directly responsible for helping the Scouts in various stages of their Scouting career, including two New Scout ASMs, one Mid Scout ASM, one Eagle ASM, and two Venture Patrol ASMs. The New Scout ASMs focus on getting the Scouts from Scout rank to First Class rank through advancement of skills. The Mid Scout ASM focuses on Scout leadership and positions of responsibility as Scouts advance from First Class through the rank of Life. The Eagle ASM focuses on helping Scouts who have reached Life rank pursue their advancement to Eagle. Finally the Venture Patrol ASMs focus on more advanced planning and high adventure outings for the older Scouts.

The Troop maintains a website at www.troop31.org. The private section contains information specific to the Troop, Scouts and parents and is password protected. The login is "troop31" and the password is "eagHle2000".

Scout Leadership and Advancement

Advancement is at the heart of Scouting. Basically, it involves moving ahead in rank as the Scout acquires skills and demonstrates his mastery of Scouting principles.

The advancement program works in two phases:

Tenderfoot to First Class

In the first phase the Scout advances through the ranks of Tenderfoot, Second Class and First Class. During this period the Scout is primarily in learning mode. When a Scout reaches the rank of First Class he is considered to have reached a baseline level of proficiency in Scouting skills.

First Class to Eagle

The next three ranks are Star, Life, and Eagle. For the Scout to move through these ranks he is expected to learn more independently and to demonstrate a higher level of leadership within the troop. In fact, filling a troop leadership job is a requirement for advancement in each of these levels.

The basic troop organization offers many leadership roles to provide opportunity for advancement. The major leadership role is the Senior Patrol Leader (SPL). This is basically the Chief Executive Officer of the troop, at the Scout level. He is assisted directly by the Assistant Senior Patrol Leader (ASPL). The troop is organized into patrols, which are groups of 6-10 Scouts. Each patrol is led by a patrol leader and assistant patrol leader.

This team of SPL, ASPL and patrol leaders compose the Patrol Leader Council (PLC). The PLC meets each month to plan the troop program, with the assistance of the Scoutmasters or members of the troop committee.

Troop 31 holds elections for these leadership positions every 6 months, in March and September, to provide plenty of opportunity for each Scout to fill his leadership responsibilities.

How to Help Your Scout Advance

Tenderfoot through First Class

A big part of Scouting is advancement, which means moving upward in rank, starting with Tenderfoot and culminating with Eagle. Scouting is designed to develop individual Scouts as they move upward by creating age appropriate and challenging goals at each step of the way. For example, to achieve Tenderfoot the Scout must learn or memorize a few simple facts and skills, which are basic to Scouting. However, by the time he reaches Eagle rank he must have demonstrated not only significant proficiency in 21 merit badges, but also have demonstrated leadership capabilities and commitment to Scout Spirit (living by the Scout Oath and the Scout Law).

Our structure of troop meetings, monthly outings, and summer camps provides the basic opportunities for Scouts to reach these goals. But there is no doubt that parental support and involvement can play a major role in moving the Scout ahead with his advancement. Here are some things you can do to help your Scout move along:

Pacific Skyline Council believes that each Scout should be encouraged (and helped!) to reach First Class by the end of his first year. The First Class rank is considered the journeyman Scout rank, and at this level the Scout has learned all of the skills needed to proceed to more sophisticated skill development and leadership challenges.

If your Scout is in this advancement range here are some things you can do to assist him with advancement:

Borrow your Scout's Boy Scout Handbook. Take a look through the requirement list for his next rank and see which ones you can coach him on. If possible, sit down with him and help him work through some of the requirements. (The Assistant Scoutmasters are prepared to teach all of these skills, but any help from a parent accelerates the process). When he has mastered the skills, have him approach the Assistant Scoutmaster (Bill Gascoyne) to demonstrate his mastery of the skills so he will receive his advancement credit.

Summer Camp can provide a major boost to his advancement. Scout summer camps have a specially organized program for younger Scouts (called Skills Patrol), which focuses on helping new Scouts reach First Class within their first year. *If at all possible, help your Scout get to summer camp his first year with the troop.*

Help him participate in the monthly outings. Many advancement requirements can only be satisfied in an outdoors setting, and the outings are primarily designed for this purpose - to provide the opportunity to work on outdoor advancement requirements.

In closing, it is important to remember that at the core of Scouting is values - the values which are put forth in the Scout Oath and the Scout Law. If your Scout knows that these values are important to you then Scouting will be a reinforcing experience for him.

Star and Life

The earliest stages of advancement in Scouting (from Tenderfoot through First Class) are fairly standard. The requirements for advancement through these ranks are intended to be straight forward, and are primarily focused on the development of Scouting and outdoor skills. The First

Class rank is intended to be the baseline of Scouting skills, which all Scouts should achieve in about a year's time.

However, after the Scout has reached First Class the emphasis moves beyond the simple acquisition of skills, and starts to put more focus on Scout Spirit and leadership abilities. These are the more intangible advancement factors, which the Troop Advancement Board of Review examines as the Scout appears for his review. For Star and Life ranks these factors become progressively more important.

In general, the requirements for Star and Life are based on time in rank, Scout Spirit, service hours, merit badges, leadership positions, the Scoutmaster conference and the Board of Review.

Scout Spirit is simply defined as living by the Scout Oath and Scout Law in everyday life. Although this may sound simple, as the Scout becomes more senior in the troop he is expected to embody these principles in a way that is visible to all other Scouts. As the Scout becomes more senior he is expected to behave as a role model for other younger Scouts, not only in his everyday life, but especially in troop meetings and troop activities.

Service hours represent time committed to assisting with community projects, which are of overall benefit to the chartering organization, the community, or other non-profit organizations. To receive credit for service hours the activity must be approved by the Scoutmaster. While performing his service activity the Scout is expected to set an example as a role model for other Scouts. Troop 31 is sponsored by Union Presbyterian Church, and we have a goal of performing 3-4 service projects for the church throughout each year. Each Scout is expected to play a role in supporting these service projects.

Merit Badges represent a departure from the approach of skills development which is used when advancing from Tenderfoot through First Class. Learning merit badges becomes an increasingly independent activity as the Scout matures. Although many merit badges are taught as classes at troop meetings, the Scout is expected to eventually reach the point where he is able to contact a merit badge counselor on his own initiative and bring the merit badge to completion without a classroom experience.

The Leadership requirement can be met by holding any number of troop leadership positions. There are at least 10 leadership jobs in Troop 31 that rotate every 6 months. However, it is important to understand that it is essential for the Scout to function effectively in his role and make a contribution to the troop in order to meet the requirement.

The Scoutmaster Conference is generally a concluding activity before the Scout appears before his board of review, although it may be conducted at any time during his advancement. The purpose of Scoutmaster Conference is to provide one-on-one counseling to help ensure that the Scout is on the right track. This is an especially important time to provide constructive feedback on the Scout's demonstration of Scout Spirit or his performance as a leader.

The Board of Review is the final hurdle before rank advancement, and, for the ranks of Star and Life, the Board becomes has increasingly higher expectations of the Scout's demonstration of Scout Spirit and leadership. The purpose of the board is to ensure that the Scout has met all rank requirements before approving the Scout's advancement. It is possible for a Board of Review to delay a Scout's advancement if they believe the Scout has not fully met the requirements needed to move to the next rank.

Merit Badges

After a Scout reaches First Class rank, the core of the advancement program depends on merit badges for acquiring new skills. To reach Eagle rank a Scout must complete a minimum of 21 merit badges, 12 of which are required for all Eagle candidates.

The requirements for the 12 required Eagle merit badges can be found at the following web site: <http://www.meritbadge.com>. You can also find all the merit badge requirements in the yellow Boy Scout Requirements book. Updated versions of the book are published each year, so be sure your copy is current.

Merit badges differ greatly in their level of difficulty (THERE ARE MORE THAN 110 OF THEM). Part of the Scoutmaster's job is to make sure that Scouts sign up for merit badges that are age appropriate. This is done by having the Scoutmaster approve the Scout's blue card before he enrolls in each merit badge class. For example, the Personal Management merit badge requires an understanding of many financial concepts that are probably more easily understood by an older Scout.

A crucial step which can be taken to help the Scout maximize the merit badge experience is to simply read each merit badge book before beginning a class. This makes life easier for the merit badge counselor, too. Merit badge books can be purchased at either the San Jose or Palo Alto Scout stores. They can also be purchased through the BSA Supply Division catalog at 800-323-0732 for \$3.00 each.

Although we try to teach many of the merit badges at Troop 31 meetings, it is not possible to always teach enough for every Scout to reach Eagle. It is a good idea to take advantage of other resources:

Summer Camp is an excellent opportunity to earn merit badges. As Scouts gain more experience they can easily bring home 4 merit badges each summer. Clearly, regular attendance at summer camp can make a big difference in completing merit badges. Summer camp is especially helpful for merit badges that require unique outdoor facilities, such as small boat sailing, rifle shooting, environmental science, etc.

Merit Badge Midway is a Council event held every December. This event can also be a quick way to complete a couple merit badges in just a few days. A key element here is prior preparation by the Scout, by reading the merit badge book in advance.

The District also provides a roster of trained merit badge counselors. This roster is updated every 6 months. Scouts are encouraged to earn merit badges independently by contacting counselors from outside the troop and working with them on merit badges. A copy of the roster is available at each Scout meeting.

A constant theme at Eagle Boards of Review is the questioning of whether an Eagle candidate has earned any merit badges by working with individual counselors from the District roster. Many Eagle Board members feel that the experience of recruiting a counselor from outside the Troop to work on a merit badge is a big step in a Scout's development. It requires initiative and even courage to call up a "strange" adult and ask for help with a merit badge. For this reason we encourage Life Scouts to earn at least one merit badge by this route, in addition to the class room approaches above.

Parent Participation

Troop 31 expects parents to actively participate in their son's Scouting program. A robust Scouting program is not possible without parent participation because the troop is run entirely by volunteers. Through participation many parents have found that they too can share their son's enjoyment. Less experienced parents can learn as the Scouts do - from their peers - and gradually accumulate the skills and equipment for more challenging activities. We encourage you to share the Scouting experience with your son.

Attend Courts of Award. These are held every 4 months and are important occasions for your Scout's advancement. Your presence will be important for him.

Attend periodic Troop Committee meetings. These meetings provide parents with the opportunity to keep informed, express concerns, and help plan activities. We alternate between small meetings of the committee with Scoutmasters and larger meetings for parent training, subject briefings, or other occasions requiring full attendance.

Attend outings. You'll have fun. We usually have an adult to Scout ration of 1:4, matching the usual capacity of vehicles for drivers/passengers. (This also implies that sharing the adult load means each family should plan to drive on every 3rd or 4th outing.)

Help organize troop service projects. Each year the troop participates in Scouting for Food, which raises food for needing families before Thanksgiving. We also organize Scout Sunday and other projects for Union Presbyterian Church, which has sponsored Troop 31 for more than 40 years.

Be an outing coordinator. Do you like skiing, hiking, caving, or canoeing? Chose an outing that interests you and sign up to help coordinate the trip. Every family is expected to periodically help with the planning of an outing. Check our website for an Outing Coordinator Kit that describes how to plan an outing.

Be a merit badge counselor. Are you a computer whiz, sportsman, doctor, nurse, mechanic, ski bum? Share your skills by teaching merit badges with subjects you personally enjoy. Scouts. There is a total range of over 100 merit badges from which to choose. Troop 31 is almost entirely dependent on the troop parents to provide merit badge instruction for the Scouts.

Be an Assistant Scoutmaster. We have many opportunities for parents (both moms and dads) who can help with the weekly troop program. Whether it involves teaching new Scouts the basic Scouting skills, teaching leadership or helping with Scoutmaster conferences, ASMs are essential for a successful troop.

Become a Troop Committee member. We have many defined positions such as Treasurer, Secretary, Advancement and Newsletter, which are ongoing, and others such as Scouting for Food, Friends of Scouting, summer camp coordinator, fundraising, which are once a year events. See the Adult Leadership roster for a complete list of positions.

Adult Training

There are numerous training programs available for parents to help them learn more about the Scouting methods or to develop their own Scouting skills. Specific details on adult training opportunities (e.g. time, date, location, contact number's) are published in the monthly troop newsletter.

Troop 31 requires at least one parent from each family to take **Youth Protection Training**. This is a video training program which is offered in a group setting to educate adults about Scout policies for working with youth, and ensuring a safe environment for adults and Scouts. We schedule YPT training for new parents each year as part of our orientation program.

Merit Badge Counselor training is offered monthly by the Stanford District training office. This one hour briefing qualifies you to teach any merit badge for which you feel knowledgeable. Troop 31 is very dependent on parents to help train Scouts based on their areas of expertise. This training is offered at the Palo Alto Scout office on the second Wednesday of each month at 7:30. The address of the Palo Alto office is 1305 Middlefield Road (650-327-5900).

Scoutmastership Fundamentals is offered every May and October. This 3 part course teaches you the fundamentals of the Scout method and troop organization. It is strongly recommended for Committee members and Assistant Scoutmasters. This is an excellent course for learning how a Scout troop operates, and is also a lot of fun!

Outdoor Awareness is taught twice a year. This course is intended to educate adults on the necessities of leading an extended outing, trek, or backpacking trip. It is required for any adult who leads a trip or outing which extends more than two nights from the trailhead. It has an outdoor component, which teaches orienteering, cooking, hiking and bear bagging.

Snow Camping training is taught each February. This course instructs adult leaders on the essentials of leading a snow camping trip. All Scout snow camping trips must have a leader who has completed this training.

Outings

Outings are a core element of Scouting. They provide adventure, but also provide crucial opportunities for Scouts to learn and master new skills, which are needed for advancement. When asked what they enjoy most about Troop 31, many Scouts respond that they find the outings the most entertaining part of Troop 31. That's good to hear, because that's the way it's supposed to be. BSA requires that Scout Troops offer at least six outdoor activities a year: Troop 31 plans 10 to 12 outings per year.

Outings play an essential role in helping Scouts advance by providing them with the setting to learn new skills need to move forward in rank, or to earn merit badges. For Scouts working toward First Class this includes cooking skills, map and compass, first aid, plant and animal identification, hiking, knot tying, tent pitching, and camp etiquette. As the Scouts get Older, outings contribute to merit badges, such as Camping, Hiking, Backpacking, Snowsports, Canoeing, Cooking, Cycling, Environmental Science, Fishing, Wilderness Survival, and even Communications.

Some of the outings which Troop 31 has organized in the past include spelunking (caving), sea kayaking, backpacking, cycling, orienteering, beach camping, clamming, rafting, canoeing, snow camping, rock climbing, and skiing. Each year we plan our outings calendar with involvement from the Scouts and their families. For a Scout to advance at a good rate, he should attend at least half the outings each year.

We organize our weekly troop meeting program around our outings calendar. We try to organize merit badge or skills classes which will prepare the Scout to take advantage of the upcoming outing for advancement. For example, each January we teach the Snow Sports merit badge. On our skiing family trip, at the end of January, the Scouts demonstrate their practical skills at skiing or snow boarding to the merit badge instructor.

In addition to our monthly outings, Troop 31 attends summer camp each July. Summer camp is an extremely important experience for Scouts, especially first year Scouts. Summer camp offers many skills and merit badge classes which greatly accelerate Scout advancement. As Scouts become more proficient they regularly acquire 3-5 merit badges each summer at camp.

In August we organize an annual trek. This is intended to be an adventure designed to create lifetime memories for the participants. In the past, Troop 31 has hiked the Kalalau Trail in Kauai three separate times.

BSA has established a rigorous set of safety standards for outings, to which Troop 31 adheres.

Check our website out for the Outing Coordinator Kit that provides all the information for planning an outing and a complete list of Driver information necessary for the Tour Permit.