

Welcome Letter August 7 2013



Boy Scout Troop 238
Uwharrie District, Old North State Council
Boy Scouts of America

Welcome New Scouts and Families to the Adventure of Boy Scouting!

Boy Scout Troop 238 was first chartered in 1941 by the Welcome Grange #744 as Troop 38, Uwharrie Council BSA, and we have a proud tradition of delivering the scouting program to the youth in our area. Our troop has produced well in excess of 50 Eagle Scouts, many trained Scouters, and hundreds of fine young men. Our troop has the equipment and local facilities to deliver a first rate quality program.

We are a family friendly troop, and we are looking forward to your participation in our troop. Our troop is boy led and has a great spirit and participation by all who join.

Please recognize that Boy Scouts is significantly different than Cub Scouts. In Cub Scouts the adult leadership solely planned and executed the meetings and outings. In Boy Scouts, the planning and execution of meetings and outings is primarily the responsibility of the boys.

The advancement program is also different and more individualized as compared to Cub Scouting. Boys may or may not achieve the same things on the same time schedule as their peers do. This is entirely normal and natural.

Your understanding of the differences and the shift of responsibility will help both you and your scout to get the most out of the Boy Scout program.

Having the scouts lead instead of following is fundamental to Boy Scouting and helps the scouts to learn by doing, and doing even when it is not easy. Sometimes things do not go as well as the scouts might have anticipated, and

times like these are normal and memorable opportunities for the scouts to learn and to grow.

Organization of Youth Leadership:

The top youth leader in the troop is called the Senior Patrol Leader (SPL). The SPL is elected by the boys in the troop. Under the SPL are various other leadership positions and opportunities that your scout may aspire towards as he grows.

Reporting to the SPL are the Assistant Senior Patrol Leader (ASPL), and the Patrol Leaders (PL). There are various other positions of responsibility, such as but not limited to, Quartermaster, Scribe, etc which fall under the leadership of the SPL and the ASPL.

Your scout will be a member of a patrol, and he will have the opportunity to participate in the election of the PL at troop election time. You may think of your scout's patrol in similar terms as his Cub Scout den with the major exception that there is no den leader. The boys themselves will take leadership roles with the adult leaders and senior youth leaders guiding and coaching along the way.

The Senior Patrol Leader, the Assistant Senior Patrol Leader, the Patrol Leaders, and the Scoutmaster(s) meet monthly to plan the execution of the program in the upcoming weeks. This meeting is known as the Patrol Leaders Council, or PLC meeting. Boy Scouts in this senior level of troop management may also be referred to as the "Green Bars" or the Green Bar Patrol. The term Green Bar derives from the green colored bars that are part of the official BSA position patch that these special scouts wear on their uniforms.

Adults should not interfere, direct, scold, or interrupt the youth or the youth leaders in their activities unless there is a safety issue or other un-scout like behavior occurring. In such cases it is appropriate to step in and inform the scoutmaster immediately.

Remember that the scouts are playing a game, the game of scouting. You can think of a scout troop in terms of a sports team. The youth leaders are the team captains, the scouts are players, and the scoutmaster is the coach. Just like in sports, there are no coaches OR spectators allowed on the field during the game.

General Topics:

The following information may answer some of the questions which you may have. Please call the Scoutmaster at any time with any questions or concerns.

TROOP MEETINGS: are held Monday nights from 7:00-8:30 P.M. in the scout room on the lower level (rear) of Center United Methodist Church, 186 Center Church Road, Welcome NC, 27374.

TROOP COMMITTEE MEETINGS: Meetings are held usually once a month. All parents are welcome and we invite you to participate in making Troop 238 a success. The committee meeting is also a great opportunity to find out what is going on and what sorts of things make a successful scouting program possible.

CAMPING and OUTINGS: There will be at least 1 outing per month every month of the year. Outing is a core element of Sc**OUTING**. The scouting program uses camping and outings as a method to achieve its youth development goals; therefore, it will be very difficult for your scout to advance in rank without participation in troop camping and outings. It is recommended that your scout attend as many outings as he can, *especially summer camp*.

FINANCES and FUNDRAISERS

Troop 238 does not turn away an enthusiastic boy from membership or an outing due to family financial circumstances. In cases of family hardship we do ask that you allow us to work with you in such circumstances. The expectation that Troop 238 will place on you, as parent, is to set a positive example by doing ones best at fundraising and, as parent, to help the troop to run as efficiently as possible. Helping the troop to run as efficiently as possible can take many forms such as, but not limited to, helping with outings, committee meetings, running for supplies, and so forth. In short, we are asking that you donate some of your talent and time for the good of the scouts and the troop.

Fundraisers are held as required throughout the year and finance our program, equipment, and help each scout to pay his own way by earning money for his scout account.

Camperships are available to help offset summer camp costs for those of limited financial means, and there are numerous opportunities available, via fundraising, for scouts to earn money for activities. There is usually an additional fee for outings and campouts, usually in the neighborhood of \$15 to cover such things as food, site fees, and activity fees. Occasionally, additional fees may be necessary and will be communicated as required.

UNIFORMS: Scouting is a uniformed organization and scouts should take pride in their uniform and appearance. The Official Scout Field Uniform (sometimes called Class A) should be worn to all troop meetings, Courts of Honor, and while traveling to and from outings unless informed otherwise. For uniform requirements please see the scout hand book or the troop web site.

Boys who join will be given a handbook and a neckerchief with slide at time of joining the troop. If you need help with purchasing uniforms, patch placement etc, please see the Scoutmaster confidentially. A Troop 238 Tee shirt for the Activity Uniform (sometimes called class B) is available for a minimal charge.

EQUIPMENT: The troop has some tents and plenty of stoves, lanterns, etc. in order to properly outfit a campsite for an extended period of time. Each Scout, however, will need to own or borrow the following personal gear for outings: Good quality 3 season sleeping bag; ground pad; pillow; flashlight; REUSABLE water bottle; good rain jacket. Please see the troop web site for a general list of camping gear and "what to bring".

Purchase of your own *quality 3 season* 2-3 person tent is not necessarily required and scouts generally tent in pairs, so equipment can be shared. Specifics for certain campouts will be communicated on a per event basis. Hardship situations should be brought to the scoutmaster. We have never turned away an enthusiastic scout due to lack of camping gear.

ADVANCEMENT: The rank of Scout, which is earned soon after joining the troop, through the rank of First Class can be earned quickly by the enthusiastic scout *that attends meetings and outings*. We encourage each new scout to earn First Class within the first 18 months of joining Troop 238, and the troop program supports this goal (with summer camp attendance) and some effort on the part of the scout.

The Scout Handbook gives information about rank advancement. A Scout advances at his own rate, not having a deadline other than his 18th birthday when he ages out of the program. Signing off on the completion of a requirement is only done by the Scoutmaster(s) or designated youth leaders. Parents do not sign off requirements as is the case in most of the Cub Scout program. Parents may certainly practice with their scout at home in order to accelerate the learning of a skill, but the sign off comes at the troop level with the demonstration of the skill.

Merit badges may also be earned by each scout with prior permission from the Scoutmaster. Prior approval better ensures that the scout will not be discouraged and will be successful in the merit badge endeavor given the age of the scout, his maturity level, and the level of difficulty of the merit badge.

Scouts that have completed requirements for a rank have a Scoutmasters Conference where the scout will review progress with the Scoutmaster. Upon satisfying the Scoutmaster with successful completion of the requirements the scout may ask the Advancement Chair or Committee Chair to set up a Board of Review. Once the scout successfully completes the Board of Review the rank is official. The Board of Review is not a retest of skills, but it is an opportunity for the troop committee to get to know the scout and to give the scout an opportunity to give honest feedback on his experience with the troop.

COURT OF HONOR: A Court of Honor is held three to four times a year or as circumstances require. Parents/families please honor your Scout by "being

there!" Rank advancements and various other awards and merit badges are bestowed upon those that have earned them.

COMMUNICATION: With boys at this age and stage of development communication is sometimes limited. We all know the typical response when asking your scout "What did you do at school today?" The usual response is "Oh, Nothing". The same response will likely occur when asking your scout what happened at the troop meeting and when upcoming events occur. Please note that general announcements and news is communicated **by the youth leaders** to the troop at Monday night meetings at the start of the program. Parents are welcome to arrive a little early to hear the latest news and to hear what is going on. To learn by doing your scout should be encouraged to talk to the other youth members of his patrol, his patrol leader, and the senior patrol leader for the exchange of information.

Troop 238 uses email communication and the troop web site as the primary communication channels to "get the word out". Please take the time to fill out the enclosed contact information sheet which includes space for an email address and alternative contact information. If you do not have access to email, please let us know on the enclosed contact information sheet so that we can use best method of getting the word out to you. The troop web site is:

PARENT INVOLVEMENT: Parent involvement is absolutely necessary, and parenting teenagers tends to be a lot easier with other parent's support. The boys grow fast and even though most teenagers are embarrassed to admit it, even to their own parents, - kids always thrive with positive attention.

OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES: Most of the scouts in Troop 238 are active in sports and other school activities. Sometimes the activities have conflicting times with troop meetings and outings. Most conflicts can be worked out with the Scoutmaster. Please let us know of conflicts so that we can plan appropriately. Absence by a scout may place burden on the other boys in his patrol, so it is only right a fair that the patrol leader and senior patrol leader know about key absences.

Our troop has a very active committee, including several Assistant Scoutmasters, and we welcome you to JOIN THE FUN!

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Troop 238...Let's Soar!