



Parent's Guide

**Boy Scout
Troop 161
Mattawan, MI**

Revised February 2012

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All who have meditated on the art of governing mankind are convinced that the fate of empires depends on the education of youth.

--Aristotle

BOY RUN TROOP

Troop 161 believes that our goals in Scouting, to develop character, citizenship and leadership ability, can best be achieved by giving our Scouts responsibility for organizing themselves to plan and implement the troop programs. While the Scoutmaster and the Adult Leaders are ultimately responsible for the troop, the week-to-week leadership of the troop is handled by the Scouts themselves. To the maximum extent consistent with safety and national Boy Scouts of America policy, we intend to let the Scouts learn by having the opportunity to try, occasionally fail, and more often succeed - but to do so while the adults stand aside and let the Scouts have the initiative, experience and pride of their own efforts. This is what we mean by a BOY RUN TROOP - THIS IS OUR GOAL!

WHAT IS IT ALL ABOUT?

There are three goals to Scouting:

- Goal I -- To build character
- Goal II -- To foster citizenship
- Goal III -- To develop fitness

These three goals are the bedrock of the American Scouting movement they represent the long-term outcomes we want for every Scout.

It is the mission of the Boy Scouts of America to serve others by helping to instill values in young people, and in other ways to prepare them to make ethical choices over their lifetime in achieving their full potential.

The values we strive to instill are based on those found in the Boy Scout Oath and Law.

SCOUT LAW

A Scout is:

Trustworthy
Loyal
Helpful
Friendly
Courteous
Kind
Obedient
Cheerful
Thrifty
Brave
Clean
Reverent

SCOUT OATH

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.

Since 1910, these principles have been taught in an atmosphere of recreation and fun, which allows young people to develop self-confidence, leadership and moral character. More and more men, trained as Scouts, are taking their places in today's world as responsible adult leaders. Men who have earned badges as Scouts, sit on the Supreme Court and in the chambers of Congress. Others hold important offices in our government, business and industry. Most of the members of Congress were Scouts, as well as most of the astronauts who have walked on the moon.

The Boy Scouts of America is the largest youth oriented organization in the United States. More than 4 million Scouts and leaders are currently registered in the Boy Scouts of America.

Unlike Cub Scouting, which many of you are familiar with, Boy Scouting is a youth-led organization. The Scouts learn how to organize and lead the troop. After training, and with supervision from the adult leaders, the Scouts run the show. The Scouts in the troop will be working towards their 1st Class and then Eagle ranks. As they travel on their trail to Eagle they will not only learn how to lead a team to a goal, but they will actually lead teams of Scouts in a number of situations. Many Eagle Scouts list their scouting accomplishments on their résumés and find these are often considered when seeking acceptance into college or the work force.

Boy Scouting also provides for growth of moral strength and character, teaches citizenship, and enhances the development of physical, mental and emotional fitness. This is all done in the spirit of fun and adventure.

Please take a few minutes to read Chapter 1 of your son's Boy Scout Handbook.

ORGANIZATION

Troop 161 is a participating member of the Wabano District of the Southwest Michigan Council, Boy Scouts of America. The troop's organization consists of a Chartered Organization, a Troop Committee, the Troop, and the Troop Parents.

CHARTERED ORGANIZATION (SPONSOR)

Every troop belongs to an organization. The Chartered Organization for Troop 161 is the Mattawan Lions Club, P.O. Box 62, Mattawan, Mi. The Chartered Organization shares our objectives for the Scouts and ensures that there is adequate, trained leadership. A Chartered Organization Representative acts as a liaison between us and the Lions Club.

MEMBERSHIP

Scouting is open to all boys who are 11 to 18 years old, or who have earned the Arrow of Light Award, or who have completed the fifth grade. A Scout does not have to be a member of a church or religion to be a member of this troop. Generally, Scouts select a particular troop because of convenience or because of friends in the troop.

All adults and Scouts need to be registered with the Boy Scouts of America to participate in the Scouting program.

We are governed by the rules of the Boy Scouts of America. The Scouts and Scouters (adult leaders) are expected to follow the Scout Oath and Law.

TROOP COMMITTEE

The Troop Committee functions as an administrative and support organization for the troop. The Troop Committee takes care of the non-program issues surrounding the troop. For example: newsletters, website, troop funds, fund raising activities, membership drives and Pack coordination, activity permits and coordination, advancement records, procurement and maintenance of troop equipment.

The Troop Committee Chairperson schedules the committee meetings. The Chairperson announces the date and time and posts them on the website calendar. The meetings are open and attendance is strongly encouraged by all parents and other interested adults.

The Troop Committee and Chartered Organization are responsible for selecting the Scoutmaster, approving Assistant Scoutmasters, overseeing advancement and financial matters, approving outings and establishing troop guidelines.

TROOP 161

TROOP MEETINGS

Troop 161 meets weekly in the Center Building at Mattawan Consolidated Schools. Meetings currently are held every Tuesday from 6:45 to 8:00 p.m. that school is in session. Changes to the meeting schedule will be either noted on our yearly activity calendar or announced at a troop meeting.

Skills Instruction is divided into instructional groups based upon a Scout's age, rank, and tenure in the troop. Troop 161 defines skill levels as New Scout (less than one year tenure), Experienced Scouts (all Scouts under the age of thirteen and more than one year's Scouting experience) and Older Scout (those Scouts who are First Class or above in rank and at least thirteen years old).

Scouts should bring their Boy Scout Handbook, paper and pencil to each meeting and outing.

CALENDAR/SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Events are announced at troop meetings, and listed on the troop calendar and in the monthly Troop Newsletter. Troop 161 information can also be found on the troop web page. The outings announcement will cover the activities planned for the outing, the location, estimated transportation and food costs, equipment arrangements, clothing needs, and sign-up procedures. It is important that parents as well as Scouts read all troop communications and keep them handy for regular reference.

CANCELLATION OF MEETINGS/EVENTS

The Scoutmaster will determine if conditions warrant the cancellation of a troop meeting or Event and then notify the Senior Patrol Leader, who in turn will call the Patrol Leaders. Patrol Leaders will then notify their patrol members that the event has been cancelled or rescheduled. Generally, if school is cancelled due to weather the meeting will also be cancelled.

ADULT LEADERSHIP

Two registered adult leaders, or one adult leader and a Scout parent, both of who must be at least 21 years of age, are required for all Troop 161 meetings, trips or outings. We must have a ratio of better than 1 adult to every 10 Scouts. The Scoutmaster has responsibility for overseeing all Scouting activities. One of the most important challenges as Scoutmaster is to train boy leaders to run the troop by providing direction, coaching, and support.

The Scoutmaster is responsible for training boy leaders and also is the advisor to the Patrol Leaders' Council. Assistant Scoutmasters, Junior Assistant Scoutmasters and interested parents assist the Scoutmaster in his responsibility.

PARENTS

Parents of Scouts in Troop 161 have a long-standing tradition of willing helpfulness when needed. Ours is a large, highly active troop and all efforts in behalf of our sons are done by volunteer helpers -- us! Therefore, we ask that parents plan to do their part to help the troop function. The Troop Committee Chairperson or Scoutmaster will be the people to contact to offer your services. Adult positions within the troop are as follows: Committee Chairperson, Scoutmaster, Assistant Scoutmasters, Secretary, Communications Chairperson, Treasurer, Advancements Chairperson, Outdoor Activities Coordinator, Quartermaster, Re-chartering representative, and Popcorn Coordinator. These positions are the role of parent volunteers. Also, the role of parents within Troop 161 is to be supportive of the troop's efforts and to provide the atmosphere Scouts need to learn and excel.

Parents should try to:

1. Read their Scout's handbook and understand the purpose and methods of Scouting.
2. Actively follow their Scout's progress (or lack thereof) and offer encouragement and a push when needed.
3. Show support to both the individual Scout and the troop by attending all troop Courts of Honor.

4. All parents of Troop 161 Scouts are encouraged to become Merit Badge Counselors. Please contact our Troop Merit Badge Counselor Coordinator.
5. Assist, as requested, in all troop fund-raisers and other such activities. All such assistance lowers the cost of the program we offer to the Scouts and, therefore, lowers each family's cash outlay for their Scout(s).
6. Be aware of the troop program and annual calendar.

SENIOR PATROL LEADER (SPL)

The boy leader of the troop is the Senior Patrol Leader. He is in charge of the troop at all meetings. He represents the troop at all Scout functions. In the absence of the Senior Patrol Leader, these responsibilities fall on the Assistant Senior Patrol Leader. The Scouts in the troop elect the Senior Patrol Leader and the position is held for 12 months. An election for the Senior Patrol Leader is held in January of each year. The SPL is responsible to the Scoutmaster for the operation of all activities of the troop involving the Scouts.

PATROLS

The troop is a group made up of several patrols. Each Patrol usually consists of a Patrol Leader and no less than four Scouts and no more than eight Scouts. The Scouts in a patrol elect their patrol leader and assistant patrol leader. Elections for Patrol Leaders are held twice a year – in January and at summer camp.

PATROL LEADER (PL)

The Patrol Leader of each patrol is responsible for coordinating patrol activities. All patrol functions are under the control of the Patrol Leader. During meetings the Patrol Leader is responsible for ensuring his patrol is prepared for any assignments by the SPL and be prepared to provide leadership. The Patrol Leader is responsible for all delegation of work assignments (i.e. cooking, collecting water and cleanup of dishes) and will post the information on a posted Duty Roster for each campout/activity. In the absence of the Patrol Leader, these responsibilities fall on the Assistant Patrol Leader. On the day of the activity, the Patrol Leader must organize his patrol, equipment, menus and other items ready to go on the outing. The Patrol Leader must make sure all the equipment is cleaned before being returned to the troop.

FIRST YEAR SCOUT PATROLS

The transition from Webelos to Boy Scouts is a big step. During the first year, First Year Scouts will be assigned by the Scoutmaster to a patrol. Generally 5-8 Scouts make a patrol. During this first year, the Scouts will be working closely with the Assistant Scoutmasters. Many meetings and outings are structured to introduce the Scouts to the fundamentals of Boy Scouts and in the process meet the requirements for Scout through First Class ranks. Each Scout is individual and while some Scouts may obtain the rank of First Class in 12 months, many others take longer. The requirements for Scout through First Class may be signed off in any order, but Scouts can only advance through the ranks in the normal progression (Scout, Tenderfoot, Second Class, First Class, Star, Life and Eagle). You will hear the term T21 – this refers to Tenderfoot, 2nd and 1st Class ranks.

PATROL LEADERS COUNCIL (PLC)

Patrol Leaders' Council is made up of the senior patrol leader, assistant senior patrol leaders, patrol leaders, and others invited by the SPL. Leadership positions are a commitment by the Scout to active service. The SPL, his staff, and patrol leaders take on extra obligations. All rank advancement above First Class requires satisfactory leadership service. Failure to follow through on outings, meetings, special events, or carry out responsibilities may result in the leadership position being transferred to another Scout.

The PLC meets once a month (dates in Troop Schedule; Troop Newsletter and Troop Website). These meetings are conducted by the SPL. The purpose of the PLC is to discuss and plan Troop activities for the following month.

ADMINISTRATIVE

TROOP RULES

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 the Scout Slogan. Scouts in Troop 161 are expected to follow these rules to the best of their ability. Self-control and self-discipline are attributes expected from all Scouts in the troop. There are, however, times that the Scoutmaster must use disciplinary action to ensure the health and welfare of all troop members. Discipline may also be necessary for effective operation of a cohesive Scouting program.

Discipline and control will be treated as stated in Troop 161's disciplinary contract, which is renewed by each Scout on a yearly basis. Scouts will receive positive reinforcement (praise) when exhibiting appropriate behaviors. The Scoutmaster will ultimately be responsible for the proper behavior of troop members and therefore will be expected to enforce a fair and consistent disciplinary plan.

RE-CHARTERING AND FEES

The process of re-chartering is the annual collection of registration fees and information of the Scouts and Leaders. The troop also makes a formal visit to the chartering organization to renew their commitment for the coming year. The process of re-chartering the troop should begin by September of each calendar year.

ANNUAL REGISTRATION FEES

How much does Boy Scouting cost? As little as possible, but nothing worthwhile is free. Troop 161's re-chartering fees cover the cost of an annual Boy's Life subscription, troop insurance, national BSA membership, and Troop membership. Failure to re-charter will make the Scout ineligible in troop activities. Personal hardship in meeting this requirement should be brought to the Troop Committee Chairperson for other arrangements.

FEES FOR OUTINGS/ACTIVITIES

The cost for troop activities is generally (unless otherwise announced) \$20.00 per Scout and Scouter. The fee covering the expenses of camp-out, trips, and other activities will be paid in advance to the Outdoor Activity Chairperson. Refunds for missed activities are generally not allowed unless sufficient advance notice has been given. Only the portion of the money not used to purchase food or pay a deposit can be refunded upon request.

FUNDRAISING

Troop fund-raisers are held to raise funds to purchase such items as troop equipment, insurance, and supplies. Our current fundraisers include: popcorn sales, Trivia Night, Pack Pinewood Derby, and our annual Memorial Day pancake breakfast. Details on this year's fund-raisers will be available at future troop meetings. Parents should encourage their Scout to participate in every fundraiser. In this way, the costs of the program can be borne by those that gain from it – the Scouts.

SCOUT ACCOUNTS

The treasurer will create a Scout Account for each scout that participates in the annual popcorn sale. At the conclusion of the fall sale, the treasurer will calculate the troop profit and distribute the applicable shares to the Scout Accounts of participating scouts. This troop profit is reserved for the scout to use for approved scouting expenses. A Scout can elect to use this Scout Account money to pay for all or a portion of the registration fee, camping fees, Summer Camp, High Adventure Camps and camping equipment including: sleeping bags, tents, scouting uniforms, backpacking gear and hiking boots. In order for the reserved funds in the Scout Account to be used, the scout is required to give the treasurer a signed request form and an original receipt (if applicable for retail purchases) before the funds will be released. The funds reserved in an Individual Scout Account that have not been used by the time the scout leaves the troop will be returned to the troop general fund.

FRIENDS OF SCOUTING

Each year, the Council operates its Friends of Scouting (F.O.S.) campaign to raise money for the Council operations. The Council is responsible for maintaining the Rota-Kiwan Reservation camp facilities, the Council training and program materials Camp-o-rees, as well as other Council activities, local BSA administration and local advertising. Contributions are voluntary. As years go by, F.O.S. is becoming a critical source of the Southwest Michigan Council's income. We encourage each family to participate annually in the FOS campaign.

TROOP EQUIPMENT

The troop owns a variety of camping equipment such as: tents, dining flies, cook kits, lanterns, cooking stoves etc... which is necessary to carry out the outdoor program of Scouting. This equipment, as necessary, will be available to the troop, patrols and boys on campouts and activities. It is expected that each boy will treat this troop gear in a manner following the scout oath and law. If equipment does become damaged due to careless behavior or intentional vandalism, Scouts will be charged replacement cost. Equipment Repair or replacement necessary due to normal wear or tear will be made from troop funds.

CLASS "A" UNIFORMS

- Tan Scout shirt (tucked into pants) with following insignia and patches
- Southwest Michigan Council strip
- shoulder loops
- patrol emblem
- Troop number
- Badge with Scout's Rank
- Blue jeans (good condition) or scout pants
- Scout belt
- Tennis shoes or hiking boots. Socks are required.
- Merit Badge Sash, worn at Court of Honor and other special events

CLASS "B" UNIFORM

(Worn, as instructed by troop leadership, when activities may cause damage to the Class "A" uniform)

- Troop 161 T-Shirt/Sweatshirt
- Tennis shoes or hiking boots. Socks are required.

Uniforms and insignia are worn a certain way. The Troop Leaders and staff at the Scout Shops will be able to answer any questions you might have on where to put what badge. Inside the cover of the Handbook there are guides for badge placement.

UNIFORM GUIDELINES

- a. Weekly meetings: The Class "A" uniform is to be worn at all meetings.
- b. Outings: Class "A" uniforms are to be worn to and from all Troop events and outings. Participants may change into Class "B" if appropriate for that event, once they are on site.
- c. Requirement for special events:
 - (1) Board of Review: Class "A" uniform with merit badge sash
 - (2) Court of Honor: Class "A" uniform with merit badge sash, Order of the Arrow sash (if owned)
 - (3) Parades: Class "A" uniform without merit badge sash
 - (4) Camporee: Class "A" uniform without merit badge sash or OA sash

NOTE: regarding "Official" Scout Uniform see Boy Scout Handbook, page 12 and 13. Blue jeans are accepted at the Troop Level, but official Boy Scout Uniform is scout pants or shorts.

ACTIVITIES

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

The camping and hiking programs are essential elements of the advancement process. Scouting in the outdoors helps to teach self-reliance by utilizing and developing skills such as swimming, camping, hiking, cooking, tying knots and backpacking. Scouts learn to accommodate group needs as well as eventually provide group leadership. The Scout will not be pushed beyond his capability. The troop is organized so that older Scouts and trained adults will provide instruction and support as new experiences are encountered.

Camping and other outdoor experiences throughout the school year are held in various public campgrounds, parks and reserves. Standard state campground rules, such as the prohibition of all firearms, fireworks and alcohol apply on all outings. In addition, the Troop Committee and Scoutmasters prohibit unsafe or distractive items on outings and at Scout activities. Unless specified on an outings flyer as allowable, such items as, lighters, any guns or water-spewing items (including balloons), sheath knives, hatchets or any toy or other item that might be unsafe to use or distracting from Scout activities should be left at home. In keeping with the Boy Scout of America policy of "TWO DEEP" leadership, Troop 161 will not conduct outings with less than two (and preferably three) adult leaders. If at any time, for any reason, two adult leaders are not available, the outing will be cancelled or suspended. We must also have a ratio of better than 1 adult to 10 Scouts.

SIGN UP PROCEDURE/PERMISSION SLIPS

Each Scout must submit a SIGNED (parent or guardian) permission slip to the Outdoor Activity Chairperson by the designated date stated on the calendar. The permission slip has two parts. The first part contains the outing information and instructions for the Scout and parent. The second part is the permission slip, signed by the Scout's parent or guardian, authorizing the Scout's participation in the outing and acknowledging part one instructions and requirements. The Scout is responsible for returning the permission slip and activity fee to the Outdoor Activity Chairperson.

Food charges are built in to the cost of each outing.

PERSONAL CAMPING EQUIPMENT

The camp out equipment requirements will vary depending upon the nature and date of the camp out. An Assistant Scoutmaster will specifically define the requirements in the weeks preceding the camp out. A Scout should not feel he has to purchase unnecessary or expensive equipment. However, there are standard items that your Scout should acquire in advance to avoid any last minute availability problems. We recommend the following for every Scout:

1. Mess kit eating utensils: spoon, fork, knife, and a plastic unbreakable cup, bowl and plate.
3. Sleeping Bag or bed roll
4. Appropriate clothing
5. Boy Scout Handbook
6. Flashlight
7. Canteen or unbreakable bottle
8. Poncho or raingear
9. Compass
10. First Aid Kit
11. At least one pair of closed toe hard sole shoes on all camping activities, plus a second pair.
12. Pocket Knife: a folding, pocket-sized lock blade knife to be kept in the pocket or in a sheath on the belt. Maximum blade length is 4". No Sheath knives should be allowed. No Scout can carry a knife unless he has earned a Totin' Chip card. See glossary for definition of Totin' Chip)
13. Pack (sufficient to carry the above items)
14. Matches (waterproof) – only Scouts who have earned the Firem'n Chit may carry and use matches. (see glossary of terms for Firem'n Chit)

*Tents are provided by the troop for regular troop outings.

PARENT SUPPORT AND TRANSPORTATION

Any parent is welcome at any Scout meeting and on any Scout trip. We always need help with transportation to and from outings. Any parent attending an overnight event is required by BSA policy to complete the online Youth Protection training available at <https://myscouting.scouting.org> prior to attending the event. While all parents and guardians are welcome on outings it is important for Scouts to have opportunities away from their parents to practice and develop their Scouting and leadership skills. Therefore, when Scouts are camping as Patrols, even on designated family events, it is important for parents and others to maintain their distance at times, and allow their Scouts to practice their skills and learn from their mistakes. At the end of the day they will always make you proud!

LATE ARRIVAL/EARLY DEPARTURE

Any Scout arriving late, departing early or leaving for any reason during an outing, must be checked in and out by the Scoutmaster (or designated Adult Leader). Scouts will remain in the meeting place unless dismissed by the Scoutmaster. Scouts will not leave the immediate area of a campsite without the permission of the Senior patrol Leader (SPL) or an adult leader and must use the "buddy system" at all times.

If at any time during an outing you have a family emergency and must contact your son, please call the Outdoor Activity Chairperson, and they will contact the leaders. Cell phone numbers are listed on every permission slip.

MEDICAL INFORMATION

A Scout must have a current Annual BSA Health & Medical Record filled out by a licensed physician, on record with the troop. This physical must be updated and signed every year by a physician, and parent or guardian. Each Scout must have: (1) medical information and (2) troop emergency consent forms, completed and turned into the troop before he will be allowed to go to any Scout function. The completed forms are taken to every Scout function for use in case of emergency. Adults as well, must have a current Personal Health & Medical Record on file with the Outdoor Activity Chairperson. Both youth and adults attending summer camp must have an updated physical signed by a medical doctor each year.

PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION GUIDELINES

The BSA guidelines for prescription medication on Boy Scout outings and camp outs is as follows: The taking of prescription medication is the responsibility of the individual taking the medication and/or that individual's parent or guardian. A Scout leader, after obtaining all necessary information, may agree to accept responsibility of making sure a Scout takes the necessary medication at the appropriate time, but BSA policy does not mandate nor necessarily encourage the Scout leader to do so.

In keeping with these guidelines, our Scout leaders will not hold on to and/or dispense medications to Scouts. It is the parents' responsibility to inform the Scout leaders that such medications need to be taken and at what times. The Scout leaders will then in turn remind the Scout. If you have any questions regarding these guidelines, please feel free to contact the Troop Committee Chairperson.

FIRST AID PLAN

The troop first aid plan is as follows: administer first aid, (then) call parents if more serious. If necessary take to Emergency Room and contact parents as soon as possible. In the event of accident on troop outings, the leader in charge will use his/her discretion in the selection of medical help, if unable to contact parents.

SUMMER CAMP

This is a great opportunity for fun and advancement. This is an excellent opportunity for Scouts in the first few years of the program to advance. Many of the Scout Reservations we attend offer programs specifically directed at Scouts under the rank of First Class. For those Scouts above the rank of First Class – there are many opportunities to earn merit badges not so easily obtained at the troop level, such as Swimming, Life Saving, Archery and Environmental Science, many of which are Eagle-required. In addition to Advancement opportunities, Scouts have the opportunity to swim, fish, hike, canoe, rock climb and enjoy entertaining campfires as well as the Order of the Arrow Tap-Out ceremony.

BUCKSKIN CAMPER

This is a local award. The requirements are that a Scout obtains the Rank of First Class, complete 15 days and nights of camping including one-long term camp of at least 6 nights. Upon completion of the requirements, the Scout can obtain the Buckskin Camper Application from the Advancement Chairperson, fill it out and submit it to the Scoutmaster for approval. The Buckskin Camper Award is worn on the right side of the Scout shirt on the pocket flap. Buckskin Campers earn the right to use their own tent on campouts –with the Scoutmaster’s prior approval.

VENTURE PATROL

The Venture Patrol is open to Scouts in ninth grade, First Class, and above, Buckskin Camper qualified, and Scoutmaster recommended. The patrol is a group of older Scouts within the troop patrols who have the opportunity to go on additional outings during the year.

POLAR BEAR / KLONDYKE DERBY

The troop schedules a January Campout to accommodate this locally generated award. The requirements for this award are: Scout must be a Buckskin Camper and recommended by the Scoutmaster, the Three meals must be prepared on an open fire, there must be snow on the ground, and the temperature must dip below 20 degrees Fahrenheit at sometime during the 24 hours that the Scout remains outdoors. Upon successful completion of this outing the Scout must obtain a Polar Bear Application from the Advancement Chair, fill it out and submit it to the Scoutmaster for approval.

CAMPOREES

The district sponsors a Spring and Fall Camp-o-ree hosted by local troops. These events are a key part of the Scouting experience. They are an ideal way to interact with Scouts from other troops and participate in inter-patrol/troop competition testing various Scouting skills.

ORDER OF THE ARROW

The Order of the Arrow (OA) is Scouting’s national honor society. The local lodge is Nacha-Mawat #373. They conduct lodge meetings monthly (generally the first Tuesday of each month). The members of the local lodge consist of scouts from troops within the Southwest Michigan Council. The Purpose of the Order of the Arrow is:

- To recognize those campers--Scouts and Scouters--who best exemplify the Scout Oath and Law in their daily lives and by such recognition, cause other campers to conduct themselves in such a manner as to warrant recognition.
- To develop and maintain camping tradition and spirit.
- To promote Scout camping, which reaches its greatest effectiveness as a part of the units camping program, both year-round and in the summer camp, as directed by the camping committee of the council.
- To crystallize the Scout habit of helpfulness into a life purpose of leadership in cheerful service to others. Elections are generally conducted in January of each year. Scouts must be First Class of rank or higher, have spent 15 days and nights of camping; including 6 consecutive days and 5 nights of resident camping. The Scouts eligible for election into the Order of the Arrow must also have approval of the Scoutmaster. The election is open to all registered Scouts in the troop. A Scout must receive at least 50% of the vote and at least 50% of the registered Scouts must be present for a valid election. Generally, two Scouts are elected each year, but the number can vary. Each year the troop may select an adult leader to be inducted into the Order of the Arrow.

TRAINING

ADULT TRAINING

YOUTH PROTECTION (ADULT)

A comprehensive youth protection training program for all BSA professionals, volunteers, and participating parents. The training consists of a web-based tutorial with materials that cover recognizing and reporting child abuse. This training is required before attending any overnight event.

NEW PARENT ORIENTATION

This meeting is conducted typically after Cross Over at the first meeting the new Scouts attend. The purpose is to introduce Leaders, explain the Troop Program, Patrol Method and answer questions. This information is also posted on our troop website <http://home.comcast.net/~troop161/index.htm> for future reference.

SAFE SWIM DEFENSE

Training is available at the District level and also offered at Summer Camps. The training is valid for two years and is required of at least two adults for the troop to participate in swimming activities.

SAFETY AFLOAT

Training is available at least yearly at the District Level and also offered at Summer Camp. This training is valid for 2 years and is required of at least 2 adults for the troop to participate in activities involving watercraft.

NEW ADULT ESSENTIALS (Formerly Scoutmaster Fundamentals I)

This is the new Basic Leader Training. New Leader Essentials is an introductory session that highlights the values, aims, history, funding and methods of Scouting. It is aimed for all unit-based volunteers to take at the same time. Each leader completes New Leader Essentials training only once. To be considered trained; a leader must take the New Leader Essentials and the job specific training for their program or position.

LEADER SPECIFIC TRAINING (Formerly Scoutmaster Fundamentals II)

Once the volunteer has a solid overview of the Boy Scouts of America's values-based program, they begin training for their specific Scouting position that provides the specialized knowledge a new leader needs in order to assume a leadership role. Leader specific training has been developed all unit positions.

BOY SCOUT LEADER SPECIFIC TRAINING (Formerly Scoutmaster Training III)

Scoutmasters/Assistant Scoutmasters: This training is divided into four parts. The first three focus on troop operations. The fourth part focuses on outdoor skills (see Intro to Outdoor Leader Skills below). A leader is considered trained when he or she has completed New Leader Essentials and the Leader Specific Training.

Troop Committee Members: Troop Committee Training consists of the Troop Committee Challenge. After completion, a troop committee member is considered trained

INTRODUCTION TO OUTDOOR LEADER SKILLS (Formerly Council Outdoor Training-COT)

This is a required outdoor training for all Scoutmasters, assistant Scoutmasters, and Varsity Scout coaches. The skills taught are based on the Scouting skills found in the Boy Scout Handbook. The course is ideal the leaders listed above since it focuses on skills that build confidence and competence in leaders conducting outdoor camping experiences. To be considered trained; these leaders must complete the New Leader Essentials, Leader Specific Training and this new course.

WOOD BADGE

Wood Badge will give you the training in LEADERSHIP to benefit you and your Scouting job. It will help you better serve the Scouts and Scouters you are empowered to lead. It will help you better serve the needs of all youth in Scouting. And outside of Scouting, on the job, in the home, and in your community, the skills become valuable and transfer to all walks of life. Most persons describe Wood Badge as the highest training experience they have taken.

YOUTH TRAINING

National Youth Leadership Training (NYLT)

NYLT is a leadership training encampment totally conducted in the outdoors for Scouts who will learn by doing activities in skills of leadership, Scoutcraft skills, and problem solving for Scout troop leaders. Scouts live the patrol method in an independent setting without constant adult supervision. This training is provided by the Council and generally is conducted the 3rd week of June.

YOUTH PROTECTION (YOUTH)

Boy Scouts of America actively promotes training and awareness to protect Scouts from risks of verbal and physical abuse, kidnapping, assault and drug abuse. Guidelines and suggestions are set forth on the first pages of the Boy Scout Handbook. It is worth your time to read those pages and cover them with your Scout as a Family discussion. It is national Boy Scout policy that no Scout should be alone with any adult leader or parent (other than their own). There should be a "buddy" (another Scout, adult, relative or friend) present at all times.

ADVANCEMENT

There are many definitions of advancement, but the Scouting definition might well be, simply, "the art of meeting a challenge." For that is exactly what the Boy Scout advancement program asks the Scouts to do. 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. Scout, Tenderfoot, Second Class, First Class, Star, Life, and Eagle. The higher he climbs the more challenging his tasks -- and the more rewarding.

Achievements include:

- Learning skills that qualify for Scouting's more rugged and exciting outdoor challenges.
- Developing body and mind, growing self-confidence, and helping younger Scouts climb the advancement ladder.
- Discovering how it feels to go further -- in so many ways -- further than he ever thought he could.

We don't look at advancement as a goal, but as a natural outcome of a planned, quality troop program.

There are four steps of advancement:

- The Boy Scout Learns.
- The Boy Scout is Tested.
- The Boy Scout is Reviewed.
- The Boy Scout is Recognized.

The Boy Scouts of America believes that a Scout should receive recognition for his achievements. The requirements of Tenderfoot through First Class prepare Scouts to take full advantage of all that Scouting has to offer. In addition, advancement provides a pattern of setting positive goals and reaching them throughout life.

It is the responsibility of the Scout to INITIATE the advancement. The Adult Leaders are dedicated to teaching each Scout individual responsibility and initiative in plotting his course up through the ranks. This is accomplished at each Scout meeting, Scout outing, Scoutmaster Conference, during Boards of Review advancement into next rank. Details for advancement are contained in the Boy Scout Handbook, which every Scout should obtain as soon as possible after joining the troop.

RANK ADVANCEMENT

The current Boy Scout Handbook is the most important item for a Scout to have. It explains everything about Scouting and is fun to read. Each Scout is required to keep track of his own advancement, and the troop keeps records on each Scout. The Scoutmaster and other leaders are available before, during and after the meetings to go over any advancement. The new rank is awarded the following week after all requirements are completed. We also recognize the Scout at the next Court of Honor. The Court of Honor ceremony is held twice a year – in October and May. The ranks of Scouting and the requirements to advance through them are described in the Boy Scout Handbook.

To attain the higher ranks in Scouting, Scouts must acquire certain merit badges. Some of these are specified (such as those from the Eagle merit badge requirement list) and some can be chosen from the complete list according to the Scout's own interests. (See the Boy Scout Handbook, pages 598-619, as well as the current Boy Scout Requirements book available through the Troop Librarian, to make choices.) Scouts may also be required to show other skills and/or participate in service projects. Every Adult Leader who signs off requirements is required to be registered with the Boy Scouts of America or pre-approved by the Scoutmaster. One of the requirements common to all ranks is to show Scout Spirit. That means to obey the Scout Law and Oath to be a worthy member of the troop.

ADVANCEMENT THROUGH FIRST CLASS

From the time the Scout enters the troop through the time he earns advancement to First Class, he is earning basic Scouting skills to enable him to camp, hike, swim, cook, tie knots, administer first aid, and perform other tasks in the outdoors and to work as a member of a team. With those first steps the Scout begins to build themselves physically, mentally, and morally. He will start to live with the Scout Oath and Law.

Soon he will learn the symbolism inherent in the Scout badge; he will learn that there are three points of the trefoil, which stand for the three parts of the Scout Oath: Duty to God and country, duty to other people, and duty to yourself. The goal of this troop is for the Scout to achieve the rank of First Class within his first year in the troop. This is a sign that the Scout has mastered the fundamentals of Scouting and can begin to start the long process of learning to lead others, refining the learned skills and learning additional skills.

ADVANCEMENT FROM FIRST CLASS TO EAGLE

From the achievement of First Class through Eagle, the Scout will be demonstrating leadership, performing service projects, earning merit badges and using the skills learned while achieving the rank of First Class. The next ranks he will earn are Star and Life. These ranks are harder to obtain than the earlier ranks, but are also more interesting for the older Scouts. Upon completion of all the requirements for Star and Life, the Scout will be eligible to work for Eagle. The original principals, the Scout Oath and Law now have fuller meaning for the Scout and their understanding of them is much greater. The final steps towards Eagle are filled with leadership experiences.

SCOUT SPIRIT

The ideals of the Boy Scouts of America are spelled out in the Scout Oath, Scout Law, Scout Motto, and Scout Slogan. Boy Scouts and adult leaders incorporating these ideals into their daily lives are said to have Scout Spirit.

SCOUTMASTER CONFERENCE

This is an informal discussion with the Scoutmaster or designated Assistant Scoutmaster, about the standards the Scout has met. When a Scout has completed all the requirements for his new rank he must contact the Scoutmaster to make an appointment for a Scoutmaster Conference. The Scout must be in Class "A" Uniform and bring his Boy Scout Handbook to the conference. The conference is just "plain talk" with the Scout about his Scouting, home and school life. The conferences are used to make sure the Scout has completed all the requirements of the rank he is seeking.

BOARDS OF REVIEW

The Advancement Chairperson is in charge of all advancements. The Scout must contact the Advancement Chairperson to schedule a Board of Review. When a Scout has completed all the requirements for a rank, he appears before a board of review composed of members of the troop committee. 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 ensure that the requirements have been met for advancement, to discuss the Scout's experiences in the troop and the troop's program, and to encourage him to keep working towards advancement. A Board of Review may also be held to counsel a Scout about his lack of progress toward advancement.

A board cannot retest the Scout, but can ask questions about a particular requirement to make sure the board feels he has actually learned from the requirement. The Scout must bring his Boy Scout Handbook with him. The Scout must be sure to wear his full Class "A" uniform.

The Board of Review is not obligated to advance a Scout. A Scout can be deferred advancement if the Board of Review finds he is not ready to be advanced. If the Scout is deferred advancement, ideas for improvement and a date for another review will be provided to him. If the Scout has completed all the requirements for the rank successfully, had his Scoutmaster Conference and a successful Board of Review, he will be informed that he has achieved the rank he is seeking. When he advances in rank, the new rank dates from the day of passage, even though he may not receive his new rank patch until the next meeting or receive official recognition of his advancement until the next Court of Honor. This means that he can begin working toward his next rank as soon as he passes the last one.

EAGLE SCOUT BOARD OF REVIEW

Once a Scout has completed all the requirements for the rank of Eagle, the Scout will turn all the applicable information (i.e. application, project write-up, etc.) to the Scoutmaster for review. Once the Scoutmaster reviews the information, he will turn the information over to the Troop Committee Chairperson for another review of the information, and the Scout will receive a troop practice Board of Review. This will enable the Scout to prepare himself for the District Eagle Board of Review. The District Eagle Board of Review is held once a month and is made up of other adults from the district.

MERIT BADGES

The goal of the merit badge program is to expand a Scout's areas of interest, to explore many fields, help them round out their skills, and perhaps introduces them to subjects that will become lifelong interests and rewarding careers. It also encourages the Scout to meet and work with adults in a chosen subject. A Scout working with a registered merit badge counselor earns merit badges. The Scout is required to contact the counselor to arrange for times and places to meet with the counselor.

All parents of Troop 161 Scouts are encouraged to become Merit Badge Counselors. Please contact the Troop Merit Badge Counselor Coordinator. All new counselors must fill out an Adult BSA application and Merit Badge Counselor form. All counselors are to be renewed annually.

The first thing to do when a Scout is ready to start a merit badge is to get a signed "blue card" (an Application for Merit Badge) from the Scoutmaster. Once the Scout has a blue card, he can call a merit badge counselor who can guide him through the requirements, or he can work on his own and then call the Counselor when he is ready for verification. When the Scout has completed all the requirements and had them "signed off" by the authorized merit badge counselor, he gives the card to the Scoutmaster to sign again. After all signatures are on the card, the Scout presents the card to the Troop Advancement Chairperson. The Merit Badge Counselor coordinator updates a list of merit badge counselors yearly. A listing of Merit Badges (100+ in total count) is available in the Boy Scout Handbook. Troop 161 offers some Merit Badge books through the Troop Librarian.

Merit Badge books can be purchased at the Scout Shop. Scouts must go to a merit badge counselor with a "buddy" (a buddy can be another Scout, a parent, relative or friend). Scouts are not to meet with a counselor alone.

SERVICE PROJECTS

The troop's expectation is for all Scouts to help whenever they are needed or called upon: not just to complete the service obligation for rank advancement, but whenever possible: to help our sponsor organization (Mattawan Lions Club), to help with Community needs, to help Eagle candidates with their Eagle projects, and just to be helpful as part of the spirit of Scouting.

COURTS OF HONOR

Troop 161 will conduct a Court of Honor which recognizes all Scout appointments, elections, awards, and advancements since the last Court of Honor. This ceremony is typically held twice a year - October and May. Adult recognition may be presented prior to the opening of the Troop Court of Honor. The Troop Committee will support the Courts of Honor as requested.

The Court of Honor is a public ceremony, and is a chance for the Scouts to be publicly recognized for their achievements. Parents and all other interested individuals are encouraged to attend. A Court of Honor is the ceremony in which formal recognition of achievement is given to all the members of the troop who have advanced rank, completed merit badges, won awards, or otherwise distinguished themselves. The Class "A" uniform (with merit badge sash) is worn to a Court of Honor by every member of the troop.

EAGLE COURT OF HONOR

The Eagle is Scouting's highest rank award and the Eagle Court of Honor is a national Court, the most formal ceremony conducted.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Advancement Chairperson: *Records advancements and purchases badges for troop. Schedules and coordinates Boards of Review.*

Assistant Scoutmaster: *Attends troop meetings and outings to assist in leading and teaching the Scouts.*

BOR (Boards of Review): *When a Scout has completed all the requirements for a rank; he appears before a board of review composed of members of the troop committee. 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 ensure that the requirements have been met for advancement, to discuss the Scout's experiences in the troop and the troop's program, and to encourage him to keep working towards advancement. A Board of Review may also be held to counsel a Scout about his lack of progress toward advancement.*

Buddy System: *two or more scouts paired together when attending any scouting activity, merit badge work, outdoor activity or other strenuous programs.*

Charter Representative: *is a member of the chartered organization and the recognized head of its Scouting Department. The Charter Rep serves as the connecting link between the institution and the troop.*

Committee Chairperson: *The "go between" for the troop and the Council, and chairs the monthly committee meetings.*

Council: provides: year round training, service and support to each troop; training to support the chartered organization; guidance and methods for troop committees seeking quality leaders; camping facilities, a service center, a professional staff to assist each scout in every possible way; general liability insurance to cover the chartered organization; respect for the aims and objectives of each chartered organization, and the promise or Scouting resources to help the organization meet those objectives.

Court of Honor: a public ceremony and a chance for the Scouts to be publicly recognized for their achievements.

District: Each council is divided into several geographic areas called districts. Each district has a district committee composed of volunteer Scouters. Their duty is to work through chartered organizations to ensure success of troops. There are several district committees devoted to : Training, Advancement/recognition, camping, Activities/civic service, Finance and Membership/relations.

Duty Roster: an assignment chart used by patrols on campouts used to schedule such items as: cooking, clean-up, fire-building and water gathering.

Fast Start: this training is a must for all parents and adult volunteers to complete – it provides an introduction to the Scouting Program. The Boy Scout Fast Start tape covers three topics: The Troop Organization, The Troop Meeting, and The Outdoor Program. This is available on the Internet at the BSA Online Learning Center (<http://olc.scouting.org/>)

Firem'n Chit: shows a Scout has demonstrated knowledge of safety rules, in building, maintaining, and putting out camp and cooking fires.

Friends of Scouting: an annual campaign to raise money for the Council operations.

Fund Raising Chairperson: Organizes fund raisers for the troop.

Junior Assistant Scoutmaster (JASM): young men ages 16-17 who help the troop achieve its goals. (generally reserved for Eagle Scouts).

National Youth Leadership Training - NYLT is a leadership training encampment totally conducted in, the outdoors for Scouts who will learn by doing activities in skills of leadership, Scoutcraft skills, and problem solving for Scout troop leaders. Scouts live the patrol method in an independent setting without constant adult supervision. This training is provided by the Council and generally is conducted the 3rd week of June.

Merit Badge Counselor Coordinator: Adult volunteer responsible for maintaining and providing troop list of Merit Badge Counselors.

Order of the Arrow (OA): Scouting's National Honor Society. It sets out to recognize those Scouts and Scouters who best exemplify the Scout Oath and Law in their daily lives, to develop and maintain camping traditions and spirit, to promote Scout camping, and to crystallize the Scout habit of helpfulness into a life of purpose of cheerful service to others.

T21: Ranks of Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First class that can be worked on simultaneously.