

Troop 219 Informational Handout

(www.troop-219.org)

- **Popcorn Orders**

REMEMBER – October 22, 2001 is the FINAL deadline for turning in popcorn orders. In addition to the profits helping at the Council and Troop level, Scouts keep a significant portion of the profits in their individual troop account – so don't pass up this opportunity to help pay your own way through scouting.

- **Den Chiefs**

I have received a request for boys to act as Den Chiefs for Pack 286. Den Chiefs are the goodwill ambassadors of our troop and go a long way to help the troop by aiding in the conversion of Webelos into Scouts.

Den Chief training was held this past Saturday, October 13, 2001 at the council office. Even if you did not attend this training, if you are interested in becoming a Den Chief, see the Scoutmaster. The position of Den Chief qualifies as a leadership position for Boy Scout rank advancement.

- **Committee Meeting**

The next meeting for the Troop 219 Committee Meeting is this Wednesday, October 17, 2001. This will be held in the Social Room at the First Presbyterian Church of Fenton and will start promptly at 7:00 P.M.

- **Pioneering Campout**

The troop shoot campout was cancelled – to be rescheduled. The deadline to sign-up for the pioneering campout at Dr. Water's property is next Monday, October 22, 2001. Permission slips were included in the September 28 handout, which is available on the web site.

- **New Horizons District CONTESTS**

Two contests are currently underway in the district.

- One is for scouts to design a district logo/t-shirt
- Another will reward with a brand new computer, scouts who focus on academic performance, troop participation and scout spirit.

See the Scoutmaster for details.

- **Order of the Arrow Dues**

If you are a member of the **Order of the Arrow**, your 2002 dues are \$10 if paid by December 31, 2001, and \$12 if paid after that. Your membership in the Order expires on December 31, 2001 if your 2002 dues are not paid. If your membership expires you are not eligible to participate in OA functions, nor wear the lodge flap or sash on your uniform.

For convenience, the troop will collect these dues and turn them into the council as a batch. If you choose to do so, see Mr. Miller to pay your dues; otherwise you must pay them at the council office (by mail or in person – council accepts credit cards). These dues are NOT included in the troop re-chartering form/fees distributed several weeks ago.

● AN OPEN LETTER TO SCOUTS AND PARENTS

Scout Spirit and Participation

Junior Leadership Positions & Training

(This is where I get on my soapbox (I do that every so often)).

The Boy Scout program is almost 100 years old and over those years it's built a wide and honored reputation for developing leaders, not only in the US but also in virtually every country in the world. The basis for the Scouting program is an active outdoor program (camping) using the patrol method. Patrols allow boys to realize their full potential starting in small groups and building to wider and wider levels of responsibility. It is designed to channel peer pressure in a positive direction. The outdoor program provides opportunities for the boy to master nature and his own trepidations, building character and self-esteem from each success and learning from controlled failures.

My almost fanatical devotion to the value of the program comes from seeing it work in action, and it kind of hangs on my sleeve but I'm not ashamed of that, in fact, I hope it's contagious. I've seen the expectation level placed on boys of scouting age deteriorate. We expect more from the boys in different ways than before; expecting them to stretch in as many different ways as we, the adults are often stretched in our business and social schedules. But with this comes a diminished expectation of performance, reliability, and responsibility and, I believe, a lower level of self-esteem, as those small but very real successes become more difficult and far apart.

Independent studies show that the longer a boy stays in the scouting program, the more valuable they report the Scouting experience was to them later in life. In response to that, the Troop 219 policy has been to encourage boys to stay as active as they can with troop events, recognizing that they may also be in football, soccer, school newspaper, drama club, etc, etc, etc. I'm not opposed to this policy – in fact it's very important for boys to try new things and follow their interests and abilities as far as they can. Even inside Scouting, the merit badge program is designed, at least in part to exploit this need.

But, we've failed the boy when he is allowed to believe that multiple overbooked responsibilities allow (or encourage) him to shirk commitments or responsibilities that he's (voluntarily) taken on to his patrol or his troop. Scouting is not the only activity your boy can or should be involved in, but EVERY commitment that your boy makes should be within his capability to fulfill, or he should not take it on, and we all need to help him learn how to do this effectively and responsibly.

Being a member of a patrol and the troop is a commitment and a responsibility. Patrols do not exist solely to serve the boy. Each Scout supports the other Scouts in his patrol. By taking the time to lead the troop, each adult makes choices and commitments to be there to provide the scouting program for each scout. We all have other things we might be doing with our time. The commitment of the adults to provide this program is based on the commitment of the boys to participate *to the best of their ability*.

Participating in Scouts to the point of attaining the rank of Eagle Scout will pay a young man back many, many times over his entire life, more so than successes in many other extracurricular activities. Because of this, I believe that Scouting is an important enough program to warrant a level of commitment at least equal to the other non-academic activities that a scout is involved with. Scouting should not be participated in only when the other activities don't conflict, but rather, scouting belongs active in the mix.

Unlike some coaches, I don't think that it's reasonable to expect boys to attend everything all the time; but if a Scout misses a troop event for some other activity, I do think that it's reasonable to expect the Scout to miss one of those other events for a scout activity. Some parents may disagree. But, I believe that the boys are old enough to make and be held to time management decisions, even if they'd "rather not" live up to a commitment they made for that day. I think that they need to learn to make commitments only within their ability to fulfill them.

Anyway, the scouting program works when you experience the whole program, not just the bits and pieces you choose to experience, and it's not fair to the other boys in the patrol for boys to leave Scouting activities before all the work assigned to their patrol is completed; or for elected leaders to regularly fail to attend. In many cases I do not think that partial participation is better than not participating at all – not for the Scout, and not for his patrol.

Next month the boys will elect their junior leaders; the senior patrol leader and patrol leaders. In taking these positions, if they accept election, I expect that the boys will do their best to live up to the challenges and responsibilities of the job. This includes attending the PLC meetings and Troop Junior Leader Training Program, which is in the troop calendar. I will not permit a boy to receive credit toward scout advancement based on a leadership position that they fail to perform *to the best of their ability*. To do less would be to fail to fulfill the trust and responsibility placed on me as Scoutmaster, a trust and responsibility I take very seriously. I hope you support me on this.

Larry Zimblor
Scoutmaster