



# 1<sup>st</sup> BLACKBURN SCOUTS NEWS



Happy 2005 to Parents and Scouts!

Welcome back to another "fun-filled" adventure-trek as we continue working on the many varied skills and responsibilities of Scouting. And YES---the "fun" has already started (if last week's meeting is any indicator).

Everyone (almost---sorry Tom & Colby) was given a Program Calendar on November 30, 2004. This multi-page effort outlines the entire Scouting year's meeting programs. It includes valuable data like---when our meetings will be held OUTDOORS. (It is actually part of the Scouting Program mandates that AT LEAST ONE MEETING PER MONTH be held completely OUTDOORS) It also outlines valuable info like proposed CAMPING WEEKENDS and meeting topics. Well, last week was the FIRST outdoor meeting and the Scouting motto of "Be Prepared" fell apart a bit under this test (as the leader team actually sort of expected). What lessons would we like everyone to draw from this experience (?):

- 1) The Responsibility for being a successful Scout and enjoying the program (while staying safe and comfortable) is that of THE SCOUT
- 2) OUTDOORS means OUTDOORS and only EXTREME/DANGEROUS weather will make us alter that theory (Rain or Winter in their "traditional" formats do NOT constitute EXTREME weather)
- 3) Being safe and comfortable OUTDOORS means understanding the conditions that exist (or will exist) and reacting accordingly to gain safety/comfort (This is where the "teaching/training" comes in from the Scouting Program)
- 4) Learning first-hand about the problems and resulting "fall-out" that can occur from NOT respecting the first THREE points CAN be a good learning experience (as long as it is done in a safe and controlled environment).
- 5) MISTAKES happen. MISTAKES can be corrected. However, MISTAKES that are NOT addressed, discussed, recognized or fixed (and therefore, allowed to continue)...are the BIGGEST MISTAKES of all.
- 6) NO ONE is above making a mistake in dealing with the OUTDOORS. It is the knowledge of good planning, considered "Plan B" alternatives and constant analysis of situations as they unfold that helps all of us STAY safe and comfortable.

Simply put---the 2004-2005 Scouting program is now moving into its' "REAL" world phase. We are now less about indoor games of basketball and "fireball" (although these games still have their time and place) and more about EVERYONE being able to (safely and comfortably) hike out, set up a fire or cooking facility, make some good chow/refreshment, maybe stay for one or two days/nites, clean up, pack up our "stuff", bring it all back, clean it up, maintain it and be ready to do it all over again. And we will be visiting all of the various skills and mental considerations that go into making these abilities a reality over and over and over AND over again for the remainder of the Scout year.

And, we will use several different methods to support each Scout's learning. General discussions, presentations (by Leaders, guests AND Scouts), personal research & discovery,  
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hands-on demonstrations, hands-on usage, outdoor trials, camp weekends and maybe even some additional things that the Scouts themselves may wish to schedule BEYOND what is already on the current Calendar.

We would like EVERY scout to have ALL of the 4 Permits (Stove & Lantern/Knives/Match & Fire/Axe & Saw) by the end of February. This will then allow the maximum amount of hands-on for them to do things as we hone our skills---leading to the two major Camps in May and June. Again, to remind everyone, the subjects laid out in the Calendar were selected so that, when completed, they specifically allow for all of the Scouts to earn their Voyageur level OUTDOOR SKILL and LEADERSHIP badges along with 1 (or maybe 2) SEASONAL CAMPING badges this year. Then, next year, combined with the two other Voyageur level SKILL badges and at least 4 CHALLENGE badges the Scouts would earn their VOYAGEUR SKILLS badge. And speaking of those CHALLENGE badges; remember that the Calendar specifically shows which particular meeting each month is set aside for personal Badge Testing. We will also allow additional time for Scouts to catch up on any skills or permit testing that they may have missed.

A new "wrinkle" that the Scouts learned about last week is that they will be called upon to do some leadership work in the form of giving an informational talk to the Troop on some of the common hazards encountered in the Outdoors. They have also been tasked with being responsible for bringing in ONE new game (NOT a board/card game---an active move-about game for either indoors or outdoors) for the Troop to play. These Hazards and New Games nites are clearly marked on the schedule and each Scout picked their assignment/night out of "the hat". By the time this newsletter is in hand we will have re-confirmed everyone's nite and discussed where they can get the necessary info to do these tasks (Internet/Scout Field Book/etc.).

We will also start handing out little pages of important info from time to time concerning things like camp craft, using a compass, knots, Scouting lore and more. To help each Scout function to the best of their capabilities for the rest of the year may we suggest the creation of a Scout Kit that they bring to the meetings. This would include: **1 Pen / 1 Pencil / 1 Journal Book (\$ Store) / Scout Program Calendar (or a version transferred to a small Calendar book) / Scout Book / Resource Material (as needed---ie: Scout Field Book, etc.) / Scout "tools" (as they become recognized and able to be used---leaders will define as we go)**. Best suggestion for the Scouts---is to "sling" a day back-pack to carry this stuff in (along with maybe your indoor shoes for the winter and wet spring thaw months) and they'll always "Be Prepared."

A final word about the upcoming "camps." The reason that we have camps is to promote skills and training through the actual need to use and apply these items. We want the outings to be fun, challenging (to a safe degree) and memorable---as well as self-fulfilling. It is the troop's responsibility to develop and manage these events (with guidance and supervision from the Leader team). We will ALL need to be sure we can handle the type of camping the troop wants to pursue BEFORE we go out to do it each month. We will also have to develop NEW (and potentially less costly, distant or established) camping sites to tackle as we go. We will then have to use planning and operations skills to make the camps "happen." Didn't I tell you at the start that the "fun" has only just begun?!! Here's to all of us as we attack these tasks.

See you along the trail !

### **Your Scouting Leader Team**

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