



Boy Scouting in Troop 868

A National Quality Unit

Updated February 2005

Welcome to Troop 868. The following guide provides an overview of how the Scouting program operates within our troop. This handbook is intended to serve as a guide for Scouts and their parents, both new scouts and veteran members. Policies evolve over time, so periodic review of this material is advised. The philosophies expressed herein should allow members to gain a clear understanding of what they can expect from us, and what we, in turn, will expect from them. We are always looking for new members to visit and join our troop. It is our belief that by setting our goals and standards high, we will attract boys who aspire to participate in one of the most traditional, most active, and highest quality Scouting programs available in the Lincoln Heritage Council.

Advancement. A significant amount of weekly meeting time is usually devoted to working on merit badge or rank advancement requirements. Records indicating the completion of merit badge or rank advancement requirements are the responsibility of the boys. Don't lose them!

Calendar of Events. Troop 868 is very active, with an outdoor event planned about every four weeks. The Patrol Leader's Council meets in August to plan the troop's program for the next twelve months. A calendar is published in late August so that troop families know what to expect. Examples of recent Troop 868 activities include weekend campouts, collecting canned goods for the annual Scouting for Food program, a week of summer resident camping (that is often extended to include visits to interesting sites along the way), an evening playing laser-tag, Merit Badge University programs, rummage sales, canoe trips, hikes, whitewater rafting, visits to the planetarium, community service projects, candy bar sales, bowling, caving, and golf outings.

Campouts. Campouts are popular outings. Depending on menus and campground fees, the cost of most campouts will be in the range of \$15-\$25 per person. The troop supplies major equipment such as tents, cooking gear, lanterns, coolers and so forth. Scouts need to bring their own sleeping bag, flashlight, poncho, mess kit, flatware, pocketknife, toothbrush, insect repellent, and other personal items. A backpack is not required for most campouts. An informational handout that will describe the outing's location and planned program will typically be distributed 10~14 days in advance. The handout will include a Permission Form, which must be signed by each Scout's parent or guardian and returned along with the fee by the due date listed. Campout fees are to be paid in cash, not checks. Exact change is very much appreciated. Fees are not refundable for no-shows or cancellations after food has been purchased or other non-refundable deposits have been paid.

Chartering Organization. Scout Parents, Inc., a non-profit, recognized 501(c)(3) corporation, holds a charter from the Boy Scouts of America to operate Troop 868. The troop holds weekly meetings at Bullitt Lick Middle School in Shepherdsville, Kentucky.

Chain of Command. Boy Scouting strives to help young men develop leadership skills by giving opportunities to lead. Accordingly, the chain of command flows from the Scoutmaster to the Senior Patrol Leader, to the Patrol Leaders, to the scouts.

Court of Honor. Several times during the year, the Troop will conduct a Court of Honor ceremony. The purpose of a Court of Honor is to recognize the advancement and accomplishments of the Scouts. Parents, grandparents, and other family members are encouraged to attend. This is a solemn and dignified occasion. Accordingly, parents are asked to hire a sitter or arrange other childcare for siblings who are too young to sit attentively through the ceremony. Doing so will allow parents to enjoy the program and devote their full attention to their scout and his achievements.

Discipline. Scouting in Troop 868 is a privilege, not a right. We believe that a set of commonly observed rules ultimately leads to greater freedom and more fun for everyone in the troop. Expectations regarding behavior are clearly communicated and explained. Scouts (or adults) who demonstrate an unwillingness to follow the rules may be sanctioned to varying degrees, up to and including expulsion from the unit. Conduct that is disrespectful of others, uncooperative, insubordinate, dishonest, or reflects negatively upon our unit or Scouting in general will not be tolerated.

Eagle Rank. This is the highest rank a Boy Scout can attain. The adult volunteers strongly encourage every Scout to work toward this goal and will do all they can to help boys become Eagle Scouts.

Electronic Devices Are NOT Welcome On Outings. CD players, radios, cell phones, TV's, handheld games, etc. have no place on Troop outings or at meetings. Please leave them home. The only exception is for Family Radio Service two-way radios that are strongly encouraged for communication and safety reasons. See "Two Way Radios."

Fees. There is a one time joining fee of \$25. This covers registration with the Boy Scouts of America and a subscription to *Boys' Life* magazine. This fee is not pro-rated for boys joining mid-year or transferring to Troop 868 from other units. So long as a Scout remains active in Troop 868 and participates in Troop fund-raising events, the unit will pay his registration and *Boys' Life* fees in subsequent years. Scouts and adults alike will pay any food costs or other fees associated with particular Troop activities.

Fundraising. There are numerous opportunities throughout the year for the Troop to raise funds. The success of our fundraisers has allowed us to avoid weekly dues and to obtain the equipment needed to support our outdoor program. The Troop Committee has decided to credit a percentage of the profit from fundraisers to a special escrow account to help boys pay for summer camp. See "Summer Camp Fund".

Examples of successful fund raisers Troop 868 has done include:

- Annual popcorn sale in November/December.
- Sale of World's Finest® Chocolate bars.
- Papa Johns' Pizza. Scouts 16 or older and all parents can work selling pizza at selected events such as UofL home football games.
- Annual spring Plant Sale.
- Annual Rummage Sale

Hazing. Hazing, in any form, is not permitted in Boy Scouting. Hazing has never been a problem in Troop 868. Violations would be dealt with promptly and sternly.

Hikes. Hikes will usually be one-day events. They will typically be from 10 to 30 miles in length. Sneakers will usually be OK. Boots are fine, provided they have been broken in. Scouts will need a good quality canteen or large water bottle. Carbonated beverages are not recommended. Bring an extra pair of socks and moleskin (in case of blisters). The cost for hikes typically ranges from \$0 to \$5. As with campouts, there will be an advance handout that will fully describe the outing and include a Permission Form that must be signed and returned prior to departure.

Meetings. Troop 868 meets every Tuesday night from 7:00 pm until 8:45 pm. It is important that Scouts attend every meeting. Merit Badge work and event planning is a continuous process. Boys who miss troop meetings miss out on important information and don't advance as rapidly as boys who are regular in their attendance. Please be prompt so that meetings can start on time. Parents are always welcome to stay and observe meetings but siblings are discouraged. Parent observers are expected to be mindful of their conversations so as not to interfere with the troop program and to show appropriate courtesy and respect during opening and closing exercises.

Merit Badges. Merit badges allow a Scout to explore over 120 topics in varying degrees of detail. The depth of coverage is designed to provide an introduction into some topics, such as *Radio* or *Geology*, but is more demanding for critical topics such as *First Aid*. In general, a merit badge will have about 10 requirements. Some merit badges are more difficult than others (for example, *Personal Management* and *Citizenship in the Nation* are both rather challenging). Others, such as *Hiking*, *Camping*, and *Cooking* are relatively easy but may take several months to accomplish. Twenty-one merit badges are needed to attain the Eagle rank. Of these, 11 are specifically required and the other 10 are electives chosen by the scout. Boys may begin working on merit badges immediately upon joining, but are not required to do so until they have progressed through the rank of First Class. The sooner a scout starts working on merit badges, the more rapidly he will advance toward Eagle.

Merit Badge Counselors. Any adult with an interest in or special knowledge of a merit badge topic may register to become a counselor for that merit badge. Counselors work with scouts to teach them about the subject and help them complete all requirements as outlined by the Boy Scouts of America. The counselor signs off on the paperwork when he/she is satisfied that a scout has satisfactorily completed all the requirements for the badge. Troop 868 strongly encourages parents to register as counselors for merit badges in their areas of expertise. However, we strongly discourage parents from counseling their own son(s) one-on-one for any merit badge. Parents may counsel their own child only when they are working with a group of scouts in which their son happens to be included. We believe this policy minimizes doubts or concerns about favoritism or scouts being allowed to slide on requirements.

Merit Badge University. Also sometimes called a Merit Badge College or a Merit Badge Fair, MBU programs are events where a number of different merit badges are offered on the same day in the same location, typically at a school or large church. The overall program operates very much like a typical day of school where scouts meet with merit badge counselors in structured classes. It is not uncommon for a scout to be able to earn 2 or more merit badges in a single day at these events. Troop 868 sponsors the largest MBU program in the local Council each year on the last Saturday of February with several hundred scouts participating. MBU programs provide valuable and unique advancement opportunities that all scouts should use to their advantage.

Medical Treatment. Prior to departure on any outing, each scout must present a Permission Slip signed by his parent/guardian authorizing his participation and granting the scoutmasters authority to secure necessary medical treatment in an emergency situation. Most ailments that occur are of the minor cut, sting, head ache variety and can easily and effectively be dealt with in camp using common first aid supplies and/or over the counter medications. The troop first aid kit includes medications for headache, allergy, stomachache, etc., but these will only be administered with prior parent approval. There is a place on the Permission Form for parents to indicate their preference in regard to such medicines. In the event of a severe injury where professional help is required, every attempt will be made to contact the parent or other person(s) listed on the Permission Form as an emergency contact.

Objective of the Scouting program. The objective of Boy Scouting is simple: to help boys grow into responsible men and citizens by instilling in them a sense of character and by encouraging them to live by the highest moral and ethical standards. Boys learn by doing. In our troop, older, more experienced scouts teach and lead younger boys. The scout advancement program sets age-appropriate objectives and the milestones created by the various ranks allow boys to gauge their progress. Scouting has been described as, "a game with a purpose." Scouting is not really about hiking and camping; those are simply some of the tools used to hold boys' interest and as a forum to teach them about responsibility, leadership, and other character-building values. The forest is our classroom. Of course, there is no point in engaging in activities that are not fun, so we try very hard to keep our program fun as well as educational. As boys walk the *Eagle Trail*, we expect them to learn about teamwork, acquire self-confidence, learn to respect both themselves and others, and embrace the principles of the Scout Oath and Scout Law as guiding standards for their daily lives.

Parent Involvement. Parents are encouraged to help out. Your help with counseling merit badges and helping with troop fundraising is a good way to meet people and have fun. Serving on the Troop Committee is an excellent way for both moms and dads to be involved without a major time commitment. Experience has shown that scouts whose parents are involved are significantly more likely to remain in the program, advance more rapidly, and are much more likely to eventually become an Eagle Scout.

Patrol Method. This is a traditional element of Boy Scouting and one of the primary means by which responsibility is taught and leadership is developed. It means that the troop is subdivided into teams of 5 to 8 scouts called patrols. Each patrol elects its own Patrol Leader. The Patrol Leader then appoints an Assistant Patrol Leader. Any patrol member who meets the minimum rank requirements set by the Patrol Leaders' Council may run for Patrol Leader; the oldest or highest ranking scout in the patrol is not automatically selected. More often than not, a boy's ability to lead and get along with others is more important than age or rank.

Each patrol bears responsibility for planning and executing its part in overall troop activities (such as planning menus, purchasing food, and preparing meals for its members). The patrol's leaders meet regularly with other troop officers (see "Patrol Leaders' Council") to plan and coordinate troop activities. Ideally, adult involvement at the patrol level is minimal. The objective is for the scouts to run their own show.

Patrol Leaders' Council. Commonly referred to as the PLC, the Patrol Leaders' Council is the primary governing body of the troop. The council is composed of all troop officers (SPL, ASPL, Quartermaster, Scribe, Chaplain Aide, OA Representative, all Patrol Leaders, and all Assistant Patrol Leaders). The Scoutmaster and all Assistant Scoutmasters also attend PLC meetings. The Senior Patrol Leader sets the agenda and chairs the meetings. PLC Meetings are typically held on the first Thursday of the month. The main purpose of the monthly meetings is to plan details of the troop's program for the immediate future (4~8 weeks out). Each year on a Saturday in early August, the PLC meets for an all-day Annual Planning Meeting during which the troop's calendar of activities for the coming year is fully planned.

Quality Unit. The National Quality Unit designation is an annual recognition of those troops that meet certain standards in several critical areas, including the offering of an active outdoor program, consistent scout advancement, service to the community, and leader training. Surprisingly, only a relatively small percentage of troops earn this designation in any given year. Troop 868 is proud to have achieved the nearly impossible by earning this award the very first year of our operation and has continued to qualify for it every year we've existed. We know of no other troop in our council who can claim this achievement. The Quality Unit award is signified by a patch that is worn by all troop members on their uniform shirts, approximately 4 inches below the American flag on the right sleeve.

Record keeping. Consistent with our objective to teach responsibility, each Scout is expected to keep track of his own merit badge accomplishments and progress toward rank advancement. Just as in adult life, this will entail the timely acquisition and storage of certificates, signatures, and other documentation.

Religious Emphasis. A Scout is Reverent. Meals are preceded by a non-denominational grace offered by one of the Scouts. The troop will either attend or conduct a Christian worship service whenever outings span Sunday morning. Troop 868 welcomes boys of all faith traditions and does not promote any specific denomination or doctrine. We are, however, openly Christian. All Scouts are expected to participate in grace before meals and to attend Sunday worship services.

Religious Recognitions. In cooperation with various denominations, the Boy Scouts of America recognizes and endorses a number of faith specific religious awards. The requirements vary by denomination but generally require the scout to work directly with his pastor or other designated person within his church. Because the earning of religious awards is highly personal, scouts typically work on these programs outside the context of normal troop activities. Troop 868 strongly supports and encourages the earning of the appropriate religious award(s) by every scout and regards the attainment of them to be a significant achievement worthy of public recognition.

Safety. Safety is Troop Policy in all matters.

Secrecy. There is no secrecy in Boy Scouting. Parents are welcome to visit any meeting or outing. On occasion, the details of certain ceremonies may not be fully disclosed to the scouts for the purpose of creating a certain mystique. However, such information will always be openly shared with parents upon request.

Summer Resident Camp. For most scouts, summer camp is the highlight of the annual program. The Lincoln Heritage Council runs a weeklong summer resident camping program at Camp Crooked Creek. Camp Crooked Creek, located just a few miles from Shepherdsville near Bernheim Forest, hosts roughly 600 scouts during each week of a multi-week summer camping season. The vast majority of troops in our local council elect to attend summer camp at Camp Crooked Creek every year.

Boy Scout Troops in our council are also generally welcome to attend camps run by other councils. A few troops, like Troop 868, frequently select out of state camps so that their scouts gain new experiences and get to see different parts of the country. Taking “road trips” is a proven method to hold the interest of older scouts. During the last five years, Troop 868 has attended five different resident camps in five different states.

Wherever Troop 868 goes for summer resident camp, parents can be assured that it will be a camp that meets the health and safety guidelines of the Boy Scouts of America National Council and that provides an appropriate program for every Scout.

Summer camp offers the opportunity to have fun while working toward Scout objectives. Numerous activities (such as swimming, archery, leatherwork, and other merit badges) are offered. A medical examination and health form is required for summer camp. Summer camp costs range from \$150 to \$500, depending upon where the Troop goes and any additional fees that may be assessed for certain camp activities. Discounts for early payment are sometimes available. The Lincoln Heritage Council offers “camperships” to attend Camp Crooked Creek for families that otherwise cannot afford to send their sons to camp. Contact the Scoutmaster for more information about camperships. Confidentiality will be maintained.

Summer Camp Fund. On an annual basis, the Troop Committee decides what percentage of the profit from various troop fundraisers will be reserved to help scouts pay for summer camp. The rate typically ranges between 25%~50% depending on the estimated cost of the summer camp trip. Amounts earned during the course of the year are held by the troop treasurer in a special "CampFund" account and may only be used to pay summer camp expenses. If a scout does not attend summer camp, leaves the troop, or ends up with excess money in his account, such funds revert to the troop's general treasury to support the overall troop program for the general benefit of the unit. Under no circumstances will reserved funds be given to a Scout or his family in cash.

Historically, nearly every scout who actively participates in all troop fundraising events throughout the year earns enough to pay 100% of his way to summer camp. The few parents who must pay any significant amounts out of pocket are those who do not support troop fundraising.

Transportation. This is a challenge for most troops that often limits how far units are able to travel for outings. Troop 868 is fortunate to own both a (former school) bus and a 15-foot box van. This bus/truck combination allows our unit to pack up and go pretty much anywhere the PLC wants to go without unnecessary wear and tear on parents' personal vehicles or concerns about unsafe or uninsured drivers. Scoutmasters who drive the bus are required by law to have a commercial driver's license (CDL).

Troop Committee. The operation of the Troop is guided and supported by a Committee of parents. The Troop Committee elects a Chairman, a Secretary, a Treasurer, and a few other specific positions. All troop parents are welcome and encouraged to join and participate on the Troop Committee. The TC has two main purposes: (1) to encourage scout advancement, and (2) to provide financial support for the troop's program. The first goal is accomplished by recruiting merit badge counselors, by conducting monthly boards or review (for scouts ready to advance in rank), and by conducting quarterly ceremonies to recognize scouts' achievements (Courts of Honor). The second goal is accomplished by planning and conducting troop fundraising activities that enable the scouts to earn the money necessary to conduct the program the PLC has planned. The TC is also responsible for the purchase and maintenance of troop equipment.

Two Way Radios. Scouts are encouraged to carry two-way radios that use the family radio service (FRS) frequencies. As a safety measure, radios may be required equipment for certain troop activities. Radios are readily available at numerous retailers for prices ranging from \$20 to \$70. Some designs are more durable than others, but we have not found any significant difference in performance between brands. Avoid 2 channel units; get either a 14 channel FRS-only unit or one of the newer combination FRS/GMRS units that cover frequencies from both bands. Generally speaking, the more batteries a unit uses, the more powerful the radio and the longer the batteries will last. Rechargeable NiMH batteries work great in these radios and can be a significant cost savings over a year's time. Like flashlights, pocketknives, and other equipment, scouts do lose or break radios. Some parents have found it more economical to purchase "two packs" and stockpile one radio as a replacement unit!

Uniforms (“Class A”). Troop 868 takes great pride in being a 100% uniformed unit. The traditional Boy Scout field uniform (commonly referred to as a “Class A” uniform) consists of official green trousers or shorts, official green socks, khaki shirt, hat, web belt and our distinctive troop neckerchief. All components of the official uniform (except the neckerchief) are available at the local Scout Shop located next door to Scout Headquarters on Phillips Lane (a few blocks from the main entrance to the Kentucky Fair & Exposition Center). Purchase of the official Troop 868 neckerchief is included as part of the initial joining fee and will be presented by the Scoutmaster as soon as the new scout has acquired the rest of his Class A uniform. A complete uniform purchased new from the Scout Shop will cost about \$100, but uniform shirts and trousers can often be found in local thrift stores or on Internet auction sites (such as eBay) for much less. Troop 868 also attempts to recycle uniforms that have been outgrown by older scouts. Unless otherwise announced, the traditional uniform is worn to weekly meetings and on most outings. “Look like scouts, act like scouts” is one of our troop mottos.

For maximum flexibility at minimum cost, we recommend that scouts initially purchase a short sleeve khaki uniform shirt and long trousers. For winter months it is OK to wear a long sleeve red undershirt or sweatshirt under an official khaki short sleeve uniform shirt. This way, one official khaki uniform shirt can be worn comfortably all year. Some scouts prefer scout shorts to trousers, and that’s fine. Scouts may also choose between knee-high socks, traditional crew socks, or the recently introduced booties style socks, so long as they are green in color with a red band at the top.

Troop 868 takes great pride in being a 100% uniformed unit. Uniforms make us readily identifiable as scouts and promote a sense of unity. The concept of uniformity includes a scout’s overall appearance as well as the clothing on his body. In all matters of grooming and attire, the decision of the Scoutmaster (who assumes responsibility for the boys when under his care) will be final. The following guidelines apply:

- Shirrtails are to be tucked in at all times.
- Shirtsleeves are not to be rolled up so as to imitate muscle shirts.
- Earrings are not to be worn by scouts to any troop function.
- Necklaces (other than scout related) are to be worn inside the shirt and not be visible.
- Bracelets, wristbands, rings, and/or sunglasses will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- Undershirts are not to be visible when worn with Class B shirts.
- The sleeves of any undershirt worn with a short sleeve Class A shirt must not extend below the sleeve of the Class A shirt unless it is a long sleeve red undershirt that extends all the way to the scouts’ wrists.
- Undershirts must not bear any printing that is visible when worn under a Class A shirt. Plain white or plain red undershirts are preferred.
- Camouflage attire of any kind (such as hunting clothes or military fatigues) is prohibited by BSA Health & Safety guidelines. If a scout gets lost in the woods, we don’t want him to be invisible!
- Scouts must wear closed toe shoes (no sandals).
- Facial hair must be clean-shaven or neatly trimmed.
- Blue jeans are not appropriate attire for Scouting in Troop 868 and should be left at home.

Uniforms (“Class B”). Troop 868 has also adopted a less formal activity uniform (nicknamed a “Class B”) that is worn during selected events. It consists of a high-quality, light gray shirt bearing the Troop’s logo on the front in red. Scouts wear crew neck t-shirts and adults wear matching soft collar polo shirts. Both types of shirts may be ordered through the troop at cost (\$10~\$15 each). The “Class B” uniform is worn during the day at summer camp. Wearing of the “Class B” uniform at other events will be decided upon and announced on an event-by-event basis. The “Class B” uniform is not a substitute or replacement for the official “Class A” uniform. Scouts and leaders should acquire a full “Class A” uniform first. Whenever there is any doubt as to which uniform is appropriate for a given activity, the “Class A” uniform is always acceptable.

Voice Messaging System. Troop 868 is fortunate to have access to a voice messaging system to keep parents informed of our progress when returning from troop outings. Parents may call the system to hear an updated message left by one of the scoutmasters letting them know what’s happening if the troop is running either ahead of or behind schedule. By calling this system, parents will know when the troop will be returning; so time spent waiting in a parking lot should be minimal. For extended trips, such as summer camp, the scoutmasters will usually update the message daily so that parents will know things are going well and can rest easy. The number to call to access the system is 502-238-8597. The system also allows callers to leave messages for the scoutmasters; but since this is not the intended use of the system, messages may not be retrieved promptly.

Web Site. Troop 868 is proud to have a presence on the Internet. Our web site, www.bsatroop868.com, contains a wealth of information about troop events, troop history, troop policies, and troop personnel as well as links to other Scouting-related sites. A sincere effort is made to keep the site both current and accurate. Among other things, photos and brief biographical information about both adult and boy leaders is posted. Youth members of the troop are only identified by first name and personal information such as home addresses, school names, phone numbers, or email addresses is never posted. Probably the most popular feature of our site with parents is the posting of photos taken at troop events. Once posted, such photos remain on the site indefinitely. In fact, many parents (and scouts) enjoy browsing back through the archives to remember past events and marvel at how much scouts have grown. By allowing their sons to join and participate in Troop 868 events, parents agree to permit the posting of photos in which their son may appear according to the policies outlined above. It is further understood that, once posted, the photos are deemed to be in the public domain and the troop may continue to display them as part of the troop’s history.