

## Guide for Parents of Troop 935

### What Adults Do on Scout Campouts

Here is some information we try to give parents on their first campout with the troop. Camping is the heart of Boy Scouting, so please take a few minutes to read. *Boy Scouting is absolutely different from Cub Scouting or Webelos!* And while parents often accompany the Scouts on campouts, the Scouts camp with their patrol and *not* with their parents and family members.

#### **Policy Summary**

Here is a summary of our troop (and BSA) policies, followed by the reasoning for the policies. There are exceptions, but unless specifically addressed, these policies are in effect on Troop outings.

**Scout Tenting & Meals**—Scouts tent with their patrol in a patrol site separate from the other patrols. Patrols plan their own menus, cook and eat together as a team. Junior Leaders in the Pedro Patrol can tent as they wish. Adults do not eat or tent with a boy patrol.

**Adult Tenting & Meals**—Adults tent with the Pedro Patrol in a patrol site separate from the other patrols. We plan our own menu, cook and eat together as a team. Again, adults do not eat or tent with a boy patrol. You are more than welcome to bring your own personal tent or use one of the Troops' tents with other leaders. Either way, your tent is to be pitched in the area of the other adult tents and of Pedro Patrol.

**Adult & Boy Tenting**—BSA youth protection policies forbid an adult and a boy sharing the same tent. While youth protection policies do not apply to a father and son tenting together, it is Troop policy that boys tent with boys and adults with adults. If a father tents with his son, it has been our experience that the boy will lose out on many opportunities to make decisions as he is isolated from the rest of his patrol! [Yes, you are probably the rare exception, but it wouldn't be fair to the other adults to single you out.]

**Smoking/Drinking/Example Setting**—Hopefully this goes without saying, but we've unfortunately found that it does need to be stated, so here goes: In accordance with Guide to Safe Scouting adults may not use tobacco products or drink alcoholic beverages during a Scout activity. Adults should not arrive at Scouting functions after drinking. Adults who must use tobacco need do so discretely and out of sight of the Scouts. As we tell our older Scouts, we are always leading by example, so make it a good one. Please try and leave the habits elsewhere. Keep it clean - monitor the appropriateness, tenor, and language of your conversations, especially when within earshot of Scouts.

**Boy Leadership**—*Adults should not interfere with the functioning of boy leaders, even if they make mistakes* (we all learn best from our mistakes). Step in *only* if it is a matter of immediate safety or if the mistake will be immediately costly. If possible, involve a uniformed adult leader first.

**Boy Growth**—*Never do anything for a boy he can do himself.* Let him make decisions without adult interference, and let him make non-costly mistakes.

**Things not to bring on campouts**—*Anything valuable*, either monetarily or emotionally. Don't take the chance of it being lost, broken, or stolen, just leave it at home. No electronic media devices such as radios, mp3, etc... are to be brought (although a radio has been known to

mysteriously appear in the leader's area just when a big Ohio State game was on...). We are there to share in the enjoyment of the fellowship with the outdoors. One weekend without electronics won't hurt the boys, or us adults for that matter. If a Scout needs a cell phone to call his parents to pick him up, he is to keep it stowed in his gear until that time. Otherwise it is to be confiscated by the adult leaders and delivered to the parents. Keeping that in mind, adults should limit their cell phone usage accordingly.

**Adult Training & Resources**—The Boy Scouts of America provides an outstanding handbook for adults, and an excellent training course to help us understand the goals of Scouting and how to attain them. The adult manual is called the *Scoutmaster Handbook*, and it's worth your time to read it. The training is called *Scout Leader Basic Training*, and is offered in our area twice a year. It's also a good investment of your time.

### **Rationale**

Boy Scout camping activities center on the patrol, where boys learn teamwork, leadership, and most camping skills. It is important that adults not be in the middle of patrol activities such as site selection, tent pitching, meal preparation, and anything else where boys get to practice decision-making.

A key difference between Boy Scouting and Cub Scouting/Webelos is *leadership*. Look for the word "leader" in a job title, and you will begin to appreciate the difference. The *responsible person* for a Cub/Webelos den is the adult *Den Leader*. The *responsible person* for a Boy Scout patrol is the boy *Patrol Leader*.

This isn't token leadership; a Patrol Leader has *real* authority and *genuine* responsibilities. Much of the success, safety, and happiness of six to ten other boys depends directly on him.

*Boy Scouts teaches leadership*. And boys learn leadership by practicing it, **not** by watching adults lead.

So what do we adults do, now that we've surrendered so much direct authority to boys? Here are our troop's guidelines on the *indirect, advisory* role you now enjoy (no kidding, you **should** enjoy watching your son take progressively more mature and significant responsibilities as he *zooms* toward adulthood).

The underlying principle is ***never do anything for a boy that he can do himself***. We allow boys to grow by ***practicing*** leadership and by learning from their ***mistakes***. While Scout skills are an important part of the program, what ultimately matters when our Scouts become adults is *not* whether they can use a map & compass, but whether they can offer leadership to others in tough situations and can live by a code that centers on honest, honorable, and ethical behavior.

Boys need to learn to make decisions without adult intervention (except when it's a matter of immediate safety). Boys are in a patrol so they can learn leadership and teamwork without adult interference.

Being an adult advisor is a difficult role, especially when we are advising kids (even worse, our own sons). Twice each year, the Boy Scouts of America offers special training on how to do this, which is strongly recommended. And any adult is welcome -and certainly encouraged - to take the training (see the training dates are in the annual calendar or ask Troop Leaders or Committee).

If a parent goes on a campout, you are an automatic member of our Pedro Patrol. This patrol has several purposes - good food and camaraderie (of course), but more important is providing an example the boy patrols can follow without our telling them what to do (we teach by example). Since a patrol should camp as a group, we do so also; that way, adults don't tent in or right next to a boy patrol where your mere presence could disrupt the learning process.

Quite simply, our troop policy requires adults to cook, eat, and tent separately from the Scouts (even dads & sons). We are safely nearby, but not smotheringly close. Sure, go ahead and visit the patrol sites, talk to the Scouts, ask what's going on or how things are going. But give the guys room to grow while you enjoy the view. Show a Scout how to do something, but don't do it for him. Feel free to give advice, but make it a part of a learning experience that he can discover himself. Don't jump in just to prevent a mistake from happening (unless it's serious). We all learn best from our mistakes. And let the Patrol Leader lead.

Your job is tough, challenging, and ultimately rewarding, because your son will be a man the day after tomorrow.

### **Our Own Adult Patrol**

In Troop 935, we are called the Pedro Patrol, which includes all adults for a weekend event, all registered Scouters for any event, and also the current Troop's Junior Leaders: Senior Patrol Leader, Assistant Senior Patrol Leader(s), Quartermaster, and Junior Assistant Scoutmaster(s). It offers us an opportunity to let the Junior Leaders spend some time with us in fellowship, cooking, and other fun events. They get the 'reward' of being treated more like adults with respect they have earned by going through the rigors of growing up in the Troop, to very good meals, and hanging with the 'cool' adults. All this enables them a chance to work together and focus on their leadership challenges while getting a break from the rigors of the patrols (which forces the patrol leaders to do). It also gives us a great opportunity to develop some close relationships with these young men and can provide so many learning opportunities that could not be afforded without bringing them in with us. They have a lot of work to do, we can help guide them and ensure they're having some fun along the way.

As for adults, the Pedro Patrol provides some great benefit as well:

- to set an example of camping and cooking that the Scout patrols could see and follow (we can tell them a thousand times, but seeing an example and deciding to follow it themselves works better)
- to give inexperienced parents a place to eat and camp, and to give them a place to be near their sons without "meddling" in the boy leadership operation of their sons' patrols

Our adult patrol has great times together, sharing ideas, watching and helping the Scouts as needed. The camaraderie is great, we eat very well, and as always have a great time. There's only one way to find out how much, so come on out and join us!