Welcome to Troop 996!

Meeting Location:
El Retiro Park
126 Via del Parque
Redondo Beach, CA 90277

Park in the lot and walk toward the Rec Room past the tennis courts.

Date & Time:
Every Monday 7:15 pm to 8:45 PM except the first Monday of the month (planning meeting)

Scoutmaster:
Carlos Bernal, Sr (Boys)
Emily De Ruyter (Girls)

Committee Chair
Jeff Michaels

Dear Parent of a new Scout,
Welcome to Scout Troop 966!

As many of you may not be familiar with the differences between the Cub Scout and Scouts BSA programs, we would like to take this opportunity to welcome you and answer a few of the most common questions that first time Scout parents have.

The **Primary difference** between Scouts BSA and Cubs is that Scouting is a *youth driven program*. Our Scouts are separated into patrols (instead of Dens). Patrols are led by a Patrol Leader, who is a Scout, and has an assistant. We have elections, and the scouts elect the Patrol Leaders. There is also an election for the position of Senior Patrol Leader, who is the youth leader of the troop. Our troop currently has three patrols. Your scouts will be incorporated into these patrols.

The Senior Patrol Leader meets with the Patrol Leaders and the Scoutmasters during meetings called Patrol Leaders Council regularly to discuss the goings on of the troop and plan out upcoming programs. The Patrol Leaders will work with the Scouts in their Patrols to help them advance, which leads to the **second main difference** in Scouting:

In Scouts BSA, *Scouts advance through the ranks at their own pace.* This is different than the method of grade-based advancement which you may be used to in Cub Scouting. When a Scout feels that he or she has completed the requirements needed to advance in rank, he requests a meeting with the Scoutmaster called a Scoutmaster Conference. This conference is an opportunity for the Scout and Scoutmaster to get to know each other and discuss the Scout's experience in the troop. When the Scout has completed his Conference, she then asks the troop committee to conduct a Board of Review.

It is the function of the troop to provide every member with the opportunities needed to advance to First Class (the fourth of the seven Scouts BSA ranks) in the first couple years as a Scout. The program is designed to allow scouts to advance at their own pace. Scouts who are able to attend meetings and camping events will have access to all that they need to reach First Class within their first year.

Welcome again, and I look forward to your child’s future in Scouting!

The Troop 966 Committee

Terms & abbreviations in Scouts

Adult Roles in the Troop

All adult volunteers will have a state background check, complete Youth Protection Training, and be approved by the Committee Chairman.

Committee Chairman: The Committee Chairman oversees the entire troop. Some of the Chairman's responsibilities include: (a) approving all adult leadership, and making sure they are fully trained, (b) advising leadership of any and all policies and regulations of Scouting America, (c) overseeing budget and budgetary items.

Committee Member: The committee is the equivalent of a “Board of Trustees”. They are responsible for conducting the business of the troop, setting policy, and helping the Scoutmaster and Scouts with the outdoor program and other planned activities. The committee also has the responsibility to provide adults for boards of review. This is an important responsibility and is one area where help is always needed and appreciated. The committee consists of parent volunteers who fulfill various roles on the committee.

Scoutmaster (SM) : Each troop will have one Scoutmaster. This is the adult member who is directly incharge of, and oversees the scouts of the troop. The SM answers to the Committee and the Committee Chairman. The Scoutmaster's main job is not to lead, but to advise the youth leadership. Since Scouts is a “*youth driven program*” the Scoutmaster will often refer scouts to their Patrol Leader / Senior Patrol Leader.



Assistant Scoutmaster (ASM): While each troop will only have one Scoutmaster, it can have any number of Assistant Scoutmasters. An ASM’s main task is to assist the Scoutmaster, and to serve as a second set of eyes. Any adult can be an ASM and if you are interested in helping, don’t hesitate to ask.

Youth Roles in the Troop

Senior Patrol Leader (SPL): The Senior Patrol leader is an elected youth member of the troop whose job is to guide the troop. He or she will be integral to the planning of meetings, runs the meeting, and leads scouts during camping trips and other troop events.

Patrol Leader: The Patrol is the key element of the troop. The scouts are divided into Patrols of 5-10 scouts. The Patrol then elects one scout to be the Patrol Leader. The Patrol Leader, along with the SPL, works on planning and running meetings, helps other members of the patrol with advancements, and organizes tasks for our camping trips and other troop events.

Organizational Terms

Patrol: The patrol is at the root of all we do. Scouts are divided into groups of six to eight per patrol. This is similar to "a den" in Cub Scouts, but is not organized by grade or rank. Our troop uses "mixed patrols", where each patrol is a mix of ages and ranks. Each patrol elects their own leader, who along with the other patrol leaders, SPL and Scoutmaster work to make a successful troop.

Troop: In Cub Scouts, all the dens together are called a "Pack". In Scouts BSA, all the patrols together are called a "Troop".

District: Just like the troop is broken down into multiple patrols to help make things run smoothly, the Council is broken down into Districts. Our Troop is a member of the *Pacifica District*. Often our troop will attend events hosted by the District, such as a District Camporee.

Council: Scouting America is organized into multiple Councils across the US. Our Council is the *Greater Los Angeles Area Council* (or GLAAC).



Other Common Terms

Court Of Honor (COH or CoH): a formal troop ceremony where our Scouts receive any rank advancement, merit badges, and other awards. Our troop holds two each year, one in the fall and another in late spring.

Merit Badge: Merit badges are a way for scouts to be introduced to a basic life skill, a hobby or a sport. Merit Badges are a key element for advancing beyond the First Class rank. For example, to earn the rank of Eagle, the scout must first earn 21 different Merit Badges.

Totin Chip: The training a scout MUST complete before he or she can carry a pocket knife at scouting events.



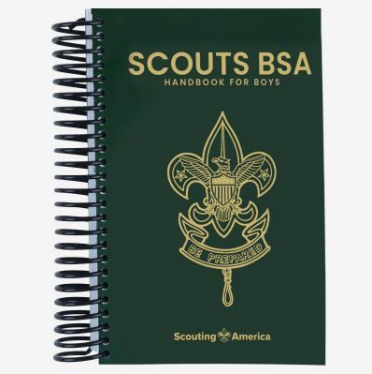
Things to get for your new Scout

Probably the most often asked question is “What do I need to get/buy?” When you see a fully equipped Scout, it can be a daunting thing for a parent to think about. Below you will find a list of things that you should get for your Scout. We have broken them down into two categories. Within each category, things are listed in the order of importance.

- Now - Things that you should get as soon as finances and/or time permits.
- Later - These things you will probably get a lot of use of, and will probably want to get your own, but can be purchased sometime in the future.

Things to get now

The Handbook and Uniform should be purchased as soon as possible. Your scout is expected to be in uniform, and to bring the scout Handbook to every meeting. The other items can wait until your first camping trip (or even longer).



Handbook: You can order this online at scoutshop.org or purchase it at the Cabrillo Scout Shop. The handbook provides all information a scout will need, as well as a way to keep track of his advancement and service hours. (OPTIONAL: it is highly recommended to get a separate protective cover for the book. The ‘zipper’ ones are nice as they serve as a way to keep pencils, notes, blue cards, etc from getting lost.)

Uniform: Uniforms have been an important part of Scouting since its beginnings — for both Scouts and adult volunteers. While their design has evolved over the decades, their purpose has remained the same: to represent equality, to communicate individual accomplishments, and to remind the wearer and others of his or her commitment to the ideals of Scouting. Scout uniforms and insignia can appear daunting at first glance, but they’re simpler than they look. The knowledgeable staff of the Cabrillo Scout Shop is always happy to help you figure out exactly what you need, but here’s a quick overview.

Scouts wear their formal “Class A” khaki shirt to meetings during the school year and to and from outings. Official Scouting American pants and belt are encouraged, however any pair of olive pants may be worn. Shirts must be tucked into pants. A “Class B” shirt, including the Troop t-shirt, camp shirts, or other scouting shirts are worn for summer meetings.

Shirt: You can order this online at scoutshop.org or purchase it at the Cabrillo Scout Shop. The Cabrillo shop allows you to try on different sizes and the shirts come with all the correct unit patches sewn on. If your scout wore a khaki shirt in Cub Scouts, can you use the same shirt for Scouts. You can also buy uniform shirts used on eBay or Poshmark though you will need to purchase and sew on the correct patches:

- Council Shoulder Patch

- Troop Numbers (troop provides)
- World Scouting Patch (small, round, purple patch worn over the left pocket)

Pants: Troop 966 asks scouts to wear either the uniform pants sold in the Scout Shop, or a similar pair of olive colored pants.

Neckerchief: You don't actually have to buy this, but it is part of the uniform so we wanted to include it here. The troop will provide each member with a Troop 966 neckerchief. *A Scout is expected to wear the neckerchief at each troop meeting.*

Neckerchief Slide: Troop 966 provides an official Scouting slide to each scout. You can also make or wear one from a camp. If you look around the troop meeting, you will see many different slides. You can start with the basic Scouts BSA slide, and eventually work on having a nice large collection.



Mess kit: Each scout should have his own 'mess kit'. This is a plate, cup, bowl, and silverware to eat with. On every trip, each scout is expected to bring his own. You don't have to purchase a fancy 'kit' for this, and can even just use items from around the house. A travel mug, a simple silverware set, and large flat lid (the Tan Maxwell House lid for example) can all make for a great kit, and no worries if something gets lost. (See "Highly Evolved Mess Kit" for additional ideas/reference)

Water Bottle: Aany standard large mouth plastic water bottle will do the job.

Flashlight: A definite need for the first camping trip is a flashlight / headlamp. Scouts only need a simple 'single sized' flashlight. Simple low cost AA or AAA lights are just fine and will be perfect for the new scout. Headlamps are becoming more and more popular as well, and are great for camping. *SUGGESTION:* Look for ones that hinge down. Having to use your head to aim the light downward causes you to keep your head down too much while in the woods/walking around camp and can lead to more than one headache.

Sleeping Bag: Another 'definite need' for that first camping trip. If your scout joins in late spring, often he can get through all of the summer with just a warm blanket instead of a sleeping bag. You can get a basic 'summer' bag to start with, and then get a 'three season' bag later. (See "Sleeping Bag Basics" for additional information)

Sleeping Pad: Nothing fancy needed, a foam closed cell padding is a great option to start with. It will help to insulate from the ground, and does not deflate through the night.

Things to get later

Pocket Knife: This is the item every new Scout *wants* to have right away, but is not needed right away. A Scout is not allowed to carry one until he has passed his “totin chip”. (*You can even save it as a ‘special gift’ for birthday/graduation/holiday/etc*)
A scout can carry any kind of folding knife that is legal to carry in California. Some things to keep in mind:



- The blade is not to be longer than the palm of the scout. When the butt of the blade is placed on the outside edge of the open palm, the point should not touch the thumb.
- The big ‘multi blade’ knives (Swiss army, or multi tool) can be unwieldy for small hands. This is usually not a good choice for a ‘first knife’ even though many new scouts really want one!
- The ‘standard’ BSA pocket knife really is one of the best designs for scouts and as a ‘first knife’. (There is a reason the design has been around for over a hundred years.) A 2.5 inch blade, a can opener, an awl, and screwdriver covers most needs for general camping.

Backpack: Many scouts will use a duffle bag, or even a ‘rubbermaid’ box for their first few trips. Whatever works for you and your scout. There is no need to get one right away, and it is highly suggested to wait a while. The troop and/or the leaders have a number of different bags should you need to borrow one. A DAYPACK is highly recommended.

Advancing in Scouts

In Scouts BSA, Scouts advance through the ranks at their own pace. This is different than the method of grade-based advancement which you may be used to in Cub Scouting. The troop will provide a program that includes all the necessary tasks for a scout to reach First Class within his first year, but it will be dependent on the Scout (a) to attend meetings each week and (b) having these items ‘signed off’ by a leader in the troop. The more effort that the Scout puts in, the more he or she will receive.

In the back of the Scout handbook is listed the requirement for each rank. The list will also contain page numbers that reference where the specific material is covered in the book. A Scout can read about what is needed at any time. He can then come to a meeting ready to show off what he has learned for a requirement sign off.

This is another difference when compared to Cub Scouts, parents can not ‘sign off’ on rank requirements. Parents/Guardians can help the Scout learn the skill, but it must be signed off by a leader in the troop. Any of the rank requirements up to and including First Class can be signed off by his patrol leader (or senior patrol leader) after demonstrating the requirement. Any and all of the rank requirements can be signed off by the Scoutmaster or an Assistant Scoutmaster.



Example: This example uses an older printing of the handbook, but the idea is still the same. Tenderfoot requirement #4a *“Demonstrate how to whip and fuse the ends of a roop (pages 380-81)“* As the parent, I can look at page 380-81 for directions, I can grab stuff from around the house to help my boy learn, I can let him practice it himself at home. For the next meeting he will need to take the stuff to his patrol leader to show him, and if successful, the patrol leader will sign off.

Merit Badges

Merit Badges are a key part of advancing at the higher ranks of scouting. You can find out more about merit badges here or by talking with the Scoutmaster or an Assistant Scoutmaster.

Forms

Most Scouting America and Troop forms are now online. Links are provided below.

Youth Application Form

Adult Application Form: We encourage you to help make your son’s troop the best it can be by joining us as a member of the committee or as an assistant scout leader.

Scout Individual Information Sheet: This is used by the troop to collect contact information. You will be asked to fill this out once each year so we have up-to-date information. (See end of this document.)

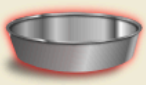
Medical Form A and B : This is the medical form we need for any scouting event that is less than 72 hours. It can be completed by the parent/guardian, no doctor visit/physical needed. The medicals are good for one year, so you can fill this out at any time, and we will keep it until the following August. (our Scout ‘year’ runs like school, from August to August). These are a standard form, can be downloaded from: https://www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/ahmr/

THE HIGHLY EVOLVED MESS KIT



The old-style aluminum clam-shell mess kit is long on tradition but short utility - It's time to scrap it for something better!

Mess Kit Plate



The thermodynamic design of the plate half of a mess kit would make engineers who design heat dissipating equipment proud. An aluminum plate sucks the heat out of food and transfers it directly to your hands.

The 'Frying' Pan



Try frying something without it sticking and burning. Never mind the handle with nuts and bolts that inevitably disappear into a pile of leaves.

The Cup



Thin-walled mess kit cups don't keep things hot, they are flimsy and unstable (try to drink hot coffee using the twiddly little appendage they call a handle).

The Pot



The mess kit pot is tiny and impractical. It holds barely a cup of water, and can't hold enough food for anything resembling a decent meal.

Utensils



The traditional interlocking knife, fork, spoon is just plain silly. Lugs on the spoon collect crud and the bowl is shallow and small. The fork is a utilitarian masterpiece compared to the dull, flimsy, useless knife that shames knives everywhere.

Canteens



Anyone who ever used an aluminum canteen recalls the distasteful metallic tang imparted to the contents along with the ghost of last year's Kool-aid. Is there anything more uncomfortable on a hike than a canteen slapping against your hips at every step?



Evolved Plate



Anything else is better than an aluminum plate: a recycled carry-out or Tupperware container holds your other gear approximating the old style mess kit.

Evolved Frying Pan

The frying pan is extinct, besides you probably weren't going to fry anything anyway. If you must get a cast-iron frying pan.

Evolved Mug



Insulated plastic mugs are everywhere, they keep things warm, have a lid, and they can do double duty as a bowl.

Evolved Pot



A 1-2 quart aluminum camping pot is big enough for two or three people to use. Camping cookware is usually two or three times the price of 'normal cookware, look for a suitable pot at the discount store.

Evolved Utensils



Why carry a fork and a spoon when a spoon will do? Plastic spoons are pretty easy to find (I do like Lexan spoons - they are cheap, light and indestructible). You don't need a special eating knife if you're carrying a pocket knife

Evolved Canteen



The capacious plastic water bottle now rules the day. A wide easy-to clean mouth, inert materials and a secure cap make for a perfect camping container Disposable soda or water bottles can be reused many times over. They are light, cheap and, if the cap leaks, can be fixed with some plumber's Teflon tape.

Provided courtesy of

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Ideas, Information, & Inspiration for all Scout leaders

Home of the Scoutmaster Blog and weekly Scoutmaster Podcast

SLEEPING BAG BASICS

Sleeping Bag Use	Comfort Ratings
Summer/Indoor	+40°F or higher
3-Season (Spring - Fall) Summer High Altitude	+15°F to +40°F
Winter Camping	-10°F to +15°F
Polar/Extreme Alpine	-10°F or lower

REGULAR VS. LONG



Get a long sleeping bag if you are over 6' tall.

TYPES OF FILL

DOWN

Down is the most compressible fill option and has the best warmth-to-weight ratio. A higher "fill power" rating means more volume and thus more warmth; ranges from 400 - 800 fill power. Down is the most expensive fill option.

SYNTHETIC

Typically polyester fiber that retains its ability to insulate when wet and generally costs less than down.

COTTON

Cotton-filled sleeping bags are acceptable for indoor sleeping or car camping in warmer weather, but never acceptable in the back-country because of cotton's heaviness, its tendency to soak up water, and its loss of heat-retaining abilities when wet.

RECTANGULAR BAGS

Rectangular bags have more internal air space to heat, are generally colder to sleep in and are best for warm weather.

Most are heavy and bulky making them a poor choice for backpacking.



SHELL & LINING

A high-quality sleeping bag's outer shell is usually made of nylon. Less-expensive bags are constructed of polyester many cheap rectangular bags are cotton. Cotton is good for hot-weather car camping or children's sleepovers, but not much else.



MUMMY BAGS

Mummy bags are widest at the shoulders and taper down to a narrower head and foot.

Best for colder weather due to less interior dead air space.

Usually lighter as less material is used than other styles.



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