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The History of the Saratoga TrailBlazers

Troop 535 was first chartered in 1959 and has been sponsored by St. Andrew's Episcopal Church of Saratoga throughout its history. We highly value the support of St. Andrew's, and stress to our boys the importance of the Troop's relationship with the church. It is a primary responsibility of each Troop member to respect and preserve church property.

Although we are sponsored by St. Andrew's, our troop members come from different cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds. This is truly one of the strengths of our program.

Our Statement of Purpose

Before going into the high-minded pillars of the Scouting movement, let's be clear that first and foremost, **the purpose of any Boy Scout troop is to have FUN!**

But while having fun, we strive to achieve for our youth the following Aims of Scouting:

- GROWTH in Moral Strength and Character
- PARTICIPATING CITIZENSHIP
- DEVELOPMENT of Physical, Mental, Emotional and Moral Fitness

To achieve these Aims we employ the Methods of Scouting:

- IDEALS Represented through the motto, the slogan, the Scout Oath, and the Scout Law.
- PATROL METHOD Providing both team building and group communication.
- OUTDOOR PROGRAM Application of the Scouting skills and experiences across four seasons of adventure.
- ADVANCEMENT Building self-confidence and maturity through external recognition and self-discovery.
- LEADERSHIP Providing opportunities for both peer leadership and peer representation.
- ADULT ASSOCIATION Setting the example of high character and strong responsibility.
- UNIFORM Establishing group identity and promoting personal pride and esprit de corps.
- PERSONAL GROWTH Resulting from the other seven Methods!

Troop 535 is proud of our long Eagle Scout Tradition, and continually promotes it to the Scouts. It is our hope that each of our Scouts will find it within himself to strive for this

Honor, but it is not our goal to *make* every boy an Eagle Scout. It is, more importantly, our promise to provide each boy every opportunity to *become* an Eagle Scout.

The Program

Boy Leadership

Troop Organization

The Senior Patrol Leader (SPL) is the principal Scout leader of the troop. He chairs meetings of the Patrol Leader's Council (PLC), which meets monthly to plan the troop program and to assign responsibilities for action. The SPL also presides over the weekly meetings of the troop, leads the troop during outings and activities, appoints other scouts to troop staff support positions, and assists the Scoutmaster in Junior Leader Training. The SPL is elected by the Scout members of the troop. To be considered for SPL, a Scout must have achieved the rank of Life Scout and be approved by the Scoutmaster.

The Assistant Senior Patrol Leader (ASPL) is appointed by the SPL with the approval of the Scoutmaster. He helps the SPL run meetings, coordinates the troop support staff (Scribe, Librarian, Historian, Quartermaster, Instructors, Bugler, Chaplain Aide, Den Chiefs, etc), and leads the troop in the absence of the Senior Patrol Leader. To be considered for ASPL, a Scout must have achieved the rank of Star and be approved by the Scoutmaster.

The Patrol Leaders (PL) are elected from among the members of each patrol and report directly to the Senior Patrol Leader. The PL appoints the Assistant Patrol Leader, represents the Patrol at PLC meetings, plans and steers patrol meetings, helps scouts advance, acts as chief recruiter for new scouts, keeps patrol members informed, and knows what his patrol members can do. To be considered for Patrol Leader, a Scout must have achieved the rank of First Class and be approved by the Scoutmaster.

The Assistant Patrol Leader (APL) is appointed by the Patrol Leader. The APL reports to the Patrol Leader and substitutes for the Patrol Leader in his absence. To be considered for APL, a Scout must have achieved the rank of Second Class and/or be approved by the Scoutmaster.

Troop staff positions include: Scribe, Librarian, Historian, Quartermaster, Instructors, Bugler, Chaplain Aide, Den Chiefs and other staff positions as may be created from time to time by the Troop Committee in response to the needs of the troop. All of these are appointed positions. The SPL, with the approval of the Scoutmaster is the appointing authority, and these positions all report to the ASPL. To be considered for a Troop Staff Position, a scout must have achieved the rank of First Class and be approved by the Scoutmaster.

Troop Guides serve as coach counselors to the Patrol Leaders, help the Senior Patrol Leader deliver program information, conduct ceremonies, operate outings, assist scouts with advancement, and are very much responsible for setting an example of Good Scouting Appearance and Conduct. Troop Guides are appointed by the Senior Patrol Leader. To be

considered for Troop Guide, a Scout must have achieved the rank of Star and be approved by the Scoutmaster.

Junior Assistant Scoutmasters (JASM) are appointed by, and report to, the Scoutmaster. JASMs work with the SPL, the PLC and the Scoutmaster to plan and deliver the troop program. To be considered for JASM, a scout must have achieved the rank of Life and be at least 16 years old. Traditionally in Troop 535, only a Scout who has served as SPL will be eligible for this position.

Patrol Leaders Council

The Patrol Leader's Council (PLC) is the planning and coordinating body of the troop. It is composed of the SPL, ASPL, PLs, Troop Guides, Venture Crew Chief, Troop Scribe, and the JASMs. The Scoutmaster is the principal advisor to the PLC. The Assistant Scoutmasters may, if required, serve as advisers to the PLC. The SPL chairs all PLC meetings. The PLC is responsible for the advance planning of all troop activities, and also serves as a Scout forum for the resolution of all questions and problems that may arise within the troop. PLC meetings are held monthly, on the third Monday in place of the regular Troop meeting and may take place either at St. Andrew's or at the SPL's home. Scouts who are interested in leadership positions in Troop 535 must be prepared to make the commitment required of the Patrol Leader's Council.

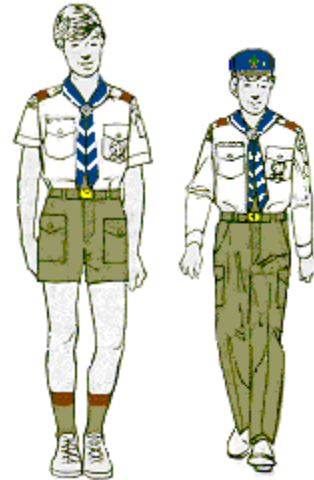
Uniform

Each Scout is expected to have the official Troop uniform within one month of joining the Troop. Purchase of the uniform is the responsibility of the Scout's family. Investment in and proper care of the uniform is one of the major commitments a Scout's family is expected to make on behalf of their Boy Scout.



The uniform for Troop 535 is the official Scout "Class A" short or long sleeve shirt complete with the proper insignia (as described below), official Scout shorts or Scout trousers, Scout socks, Scout belt, and Scout baseball hat. After completing his joining requirements, the new Boy Scout in Troop 535 is presented with a standard BSA red neckerchief. The picture on the left shows a new TrailBlazer in full uniform.

Once your Scout reaches the rank of Tenderfoot he will receive his navy blue TrailBlazer cap. On attaining 2nd Class, the Scout is presented with the Blue and White Troop 535 neckerchief with the four color Troop 535 patch.. The pictures at right represent two possibilities for a well-uniformed TrailBlazer of 2nd Class or higher. The red Scout Activity Shirt (this is a polo type shirt and not shown here) is required. It, along with Scout pants or shorts, makes up the Troop 535 “Class B” uniform for camping and other active events.



Proper placement of insignia on the Class A shirt can be confusing, and is often done incorrectly. The pictures below should be a helpful guideline for both new and experienced Scouts.

Parents of new Scouts should not panic at the number of patches shown in these pictures. Many of these only apply to older Scouts, and most are troop supplied. The new Scout needs to secure a Class A shirt (which includes the American flag on the right shoulder and the Boy Scout of America strip over the right pocket), the Santa Clara County Council patch for the left shoulder, the purple World Brotherhood Crest for over the left pocket, and of course the red shoulder loops. All others will be supplied to the Scout at the appropriate time.

Scouts are allowed to possess a short blade knife on outings and at Troop events only if they have a valid Totin' Chip Card (properly trained in the correct and safe handling of the knife) and notify the senior adult that they have a knife. All fixed blade and/or sheath knives, any knife with greater than a four inch blade, or any implements considered unsafe as determined by the Adult Leaders are not permitted.



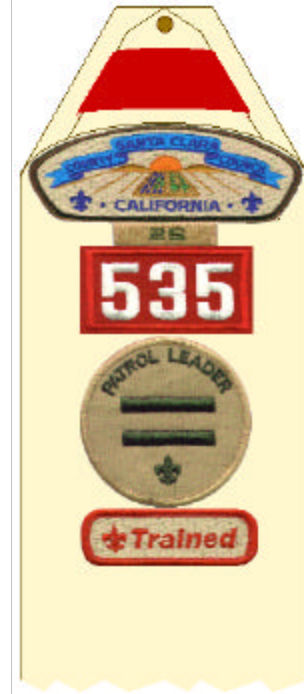
Right Pocket



Left Pocket



Right Sleeve



Left Sleeve

Activity

Meetings

Troop 535 meets every Monday evening from 7:00 to 8:15 at St. Andrew's. Each third Monday is not a general Troop meeting, but instead a Patrol Leader's Council (PLC).

Weekly Troop meetings may include any or all of the following:

- Uniform Inspection
- Awards and Recognition
- Information about upcoming activities and events
- Outing preparation
- Skill Training
- Special Interest Presentations
- Merit Badge Counseling
- Trail To First Class
- Trail To Eagle
- Recreational Activities

As you can see from the list above, weekly meetings really are not optional if the scout truly wants to participate fully. A great deal can be missed if too many meetings are missed.

Outdoor Program

The Outdoor Program is under the oversight of the adult Outdoor Chairman responsible for providing the PLC with a sound array of options from which to select outings; filing Local and National Tour Permits with the BSA; obtaining Wilderness, National Parks and Fire Permits as needed; obtaining and maintaining appropriate medical forms and emergency consent forms; maintaining an interface for the Troop with the Council Camping Committee, the Council High Adventure Team, the Order of the Arrow Lodge, and local suppliers of equipment and supplies for venture trips; obtaining maps for outings; purchasing, maintaining and storing troop owned camping equipment; arranging for the proper qualification of all outing adult and youth members; assisting the Scoutmaster in evaluating and approving the participation of Scouts and adults on all outings based on experience and physical condition.

The Outdoor Program itself, is planned and executed by the scouts, under the direction of the Troop Guide for Outdoor Programs. This scout is the focal point for all outdoor Troop activities, and is the liaison between the PLC and the Outdoor Chairman.

Troop 535 has a goal of conducting at least one troop outing each month, year round. Generally there will be a minimum of eight outings per year which are relatively easy overnight camping opportunities, plus a Fifty Mile backpacking (6-9 days) back country trip (usually in August), plus two multi-day backpacking trips as conditioning hikes in preparation for the Fifty Miler. Further, the Troop will attend one week of Boy Scout Summer Camp as a unit each year (we try to vary the destination).

Venture Crew

On attaining the rank of Star Scout and reaching the age of thirteen, TrailBlazers become eligible for membership in the Troop 535 Venture Crew. This sub unit functions much like a Patrol, but outside of normal Troop activities. Their goal is to plan and enjoy high adventure activities, which are usually beyond the capability or maturity of younger scouts.

Color Guard

The Scouts of Troop 535 are expected to show proper care and respect at all times for our nation's colors, our troop flag and our patrol flags. Each Patrol Leader is personally responsible for bringing the patrol flag to each meeting of the troop and/or the patrol. If a Patrol Leader will not be present at an event, he should make arrangements with the Assistant Patrol Leader or someone else in the patrol to be sure that the patrol flag is present at the event. The SPL or his designated appointee is likewise responsible for the American Flag and the Troop Flag.

Since 1996 Troop 535 has maintained an active, drilled Honor Guard which provides formal flag ceremonies at both Troop and community events. Scouts are invited to join the Honor Guard based on their maturity and respect for the colors.

Advancement

A New Scout is encouraged to meet the joining requirements within one month of joining...Rank = Boy Scout. It is recommended that he earn Tenderfoot two months later, Second Class four months after Tenderfoot, and First Class within six months after Second Class. Completion of the requirements through First Class may be verified and approved by any of the following troop officers that have first hand knowledge of satisfactory completion: SPL, ASPL, Troop Guide, JASM, or Instructor of at least Star rank. Sign-off for rank requirements beyond First Class requires the signature of ASMs or the Scoutmaster.

An advancement Board of Review will be convened each time a Scout has completed all of the requirements for a particular rank, obtained the required signatures, and completed a conference with the Scoutmaster. The function of the Board of Review is to verify the Scout's satisfactory completion of the requirements for the proposed rank, and recommend advancement action to the Scoutmaster.

The Trail to 1st Class

The requirements for the ranks of Tenderfoot through First Class are clearly defined in the Scout Handbook. The Board of Review for these ranks will be conducted by at least two adults (preferably three) who are part of the troop with at least one of them being a registered member of the Troop Committee. The Scoutmaster is never part of the Board of Review, but may be an observer.

Star through Life

The requirements for the ranks of Star through Life are also clearly defined in the Scout Handbook. These requirements differ from earlier in that they depend, not on mastering of specific skills, but on participation, leadership, and the earning of Merit Badges. The Board of Review will be conducted by 3 to 5 adults who are part of the Troop, with at least one of them being a registered member of the Troop Committee. Again, the SM may be an observer only.

The pursuit of Merit Badges

The Eagle Scout

For Eagle Board of Review, in addition to the adults who are part of the Troop required by Life Boards, a representative of the District advancement team must be present to sign and approve the Eagle application prior to it being forwarded to the Council office.

Each Eagle Candidate may request a registered adult leader as an adviser for the Trail to Eagle (after earning Life rank). The requirements for Eagle are very specific, and must be completed prior to the candidate's eighteenth birthday...there are no exceptions!

Adult Leadership

The Troop Committee

The Troop Committee is comprised of the parents or guardians of all active Troop 535 scouts, and other adults, over 18 years of age who wish to contribute their help to the troop program. The Committee appoints all Troop adult leaders, and annually reviews and approves the Troop Program presented to it by the Scoutmaster and the PLC.

The Troop Committee and the Scoutmaster set the basic policy under which all troop operations will be conducted.

Committee Chairman

Troop Treasurer

The Troop Treasurer is the custodian of all troop funds. He will establish a checking account in Troop 535's name. The Treasurer will present a brief report of the financial condition of the troop at each monthly Troop Committee meeting. That report will include a summary of the funds on hand, recent income and disbursements, and major income/expenses anticipated with the next 90 days.

Troop Operations

The Scoutmaster

The Scoutmaster (SM) is the principal adult leader of the troop. He may disapprove or modify any activity, which is hazardous to the health or safety, or not within the spirit or best interest of the individual scouts or of Scouting.

The Assistant Scoutmaster(s)

The Assistant Scoutmaster(s) (ASMS) assist the Scoutmaster in the performance of his functions and substitutes for the Scoutmaster in his absence.

Parents

Your Support

Parents and guardians are encouraged to participate in one or more of the following ways:

1. Encourage their boys to participate actively in the Scout program.
2. Provide consistent transportation to and from meetings
3. Assist the Troop Committee with Fund-raising activities
4. Support 100% + the proper uniforming of their Scout

In accordance with the Boy Scouts of America regulations, alcoholic beverages and non-prescription drugs are not to be used by adults or scouts at any scout activity. Further, smoking at any Troop 535 activity is prohibited. ,

Your Help

Volunteer to serve the Troop as:

- Troop Committee Officers
- Troop adult uniformed volunteers
- Merit Badge Counselors
- Drivers for Events
- Resources for Enrichment Program Activities

It is the sincere desire of the Troop 535 Committee and uniformed adult leadership to deliver a rewarding experience for our youth, Accordingly we welcome new members and new ideas. We encourage all parents to take advantage of the leadership training made available through the Santa Clara Council. One of the keys to the ongoing success of Troop 535 is the continual renewal of trained adult leaders to help our Troop thrive

Troop Fees and Fundraising

Membership is open to any boy who has completed the fifth grade, or has earned the Arrow of Light Award, or is at least 11 years of age but not yet 18.

Annual registration fees are \$40.00, payable in November of each year. This fee covers membership in the Boy Scouts of America, subscription to Boy's Life, and partially defrays the cost of awards during the year. New members of Troop 535 are required to pay this fee upon joining, along with an additional one-time charge of \$11.00 to cover the custom troop cap.

The Troop runs at least one fund-raising project each year to raise funds needed for troop equipment, awards and miscellaneous expenses. Each outing (with the exception of awards) is essentially self-funded, so outing costs can vary greatly depending on the activity. The cost of summer camp (one week) can be expected to be approximately \$200-\$225.