

TROOP 444

SCOUT/PARENT

GUIDE



FARRAGUT PRESBYTERIAN

CHURCH

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Troop Organization

Farragut Presbyterian Church is our chartering organization. The charter allows the Church to host a BSA (Boy Scouts of America) troop for its community and youth objectives. In turn, the Church agrees to support the troop by providing a safe meeting place with adequate facilities. The chartering organization is responsible for background checks of all adult applicants and will have the final approval for adults filling positions within the troop. All adult leaders and any adult working with the scouts are also trained in BSA **Youth Protection**.

The **Chartering Organization Representative** is a member of the church who serves on the troop committee and acts as a liaison between the troop and the chartering organization. The **Troop Committee** is a group of adults who support the troop by insuring the troop adult leadership is adequate, by providing various support functions, delivering quality troop programs, handling troop administration, and by insuring that the troop is functioning by official BSA policy. **Committee meetings** are usually held on the first Monday of each month and **all parents are encouraged to attend**.

Our troop is organized using the patrol system. The troop elects a Senior Patrol Leader who conducts the troop meetings and leads the Patrol Leader Council. This is a **boy-run troop**. The *Scouts* plan and carry out their activities with the advice and support of the Scoutmaster and the Troop Committee. Each Scout is assigned to a patrol with the Patrol Leader in charge, with the help of his assistants and members of the patrol.

The Role of a Scout Parent

Scouting is a family affair. No Scout is expected to travel the trail to Eagle by himself. Parents should encourage their son to work on advancement and take full advantage of the Scouting program offered by **Troop 444**. Parents are invited to all weekly troop meetings, monthly Committee meetings (usually the first Monday of the month at 7 p.m.), and Court of Honors held 3-4 times a year.

Parents must read and discuss and then sign off on the Parents Guide in the front of the Scout Handbook in order for their Scout to earn the rank of Scout.

Parents may not sign off on advancement or merit badges for their own son. Advancements through First Class may be signed off by his Patrol Leader, Troop Guide, senior Scouts, Assistant Scoutmasters, and the Scoutmaster. Above First Class, only the Scoutmaster or Assistant Scoutmaster may sign off advancements. Merit Badges may be signed off by the merit badge counselor, and approved by the Scoutmaster/committee. A parent cannot be a counselor without Scoutmaster/Troop Committee approval, for each time a merit badge is taught.

Each family is welcomed and encouraged to provide assistance on camping trips, with transportation, merit badges and specific committee jobs. If a parent has a special skill or training, he or she is encouraged to serve as Merit Badge Counselor for any of the 120+ different merit badges. For the adult who wants to take a more active role in Scouting, there are Council-training opportunities held several times a year. Please see either the Scoutmaster or Committee Chair for more information.

Troop Operations

Communications

Check our website: www.troop444.org

Listen to announcements at the beginning of troop meetings

Read the board posted during troop meetings

Read this guide/ ask the Committee Chairperson or Scoutmaster

Meeting Format

Troop meetings begin promptly at 7:00 p.m. Tuesday nights at Farragut Presbyterian Church in the Fellowship Hall. They end at 8:30. We begin and end our meetings with a flag ceremony. Brief announcements and recognitions are made at the closing so parents may hear as well as a reminder to the boys.

The agenda during the meetings varies according to the PLC (Patrol Leader Council) planning. We conduct merit badge classes, practice skills, hold Scoutmaster Conferences and Boards of Review as well as games and programs.

All boys are expected to help clean up before leaving the meeting, which includes putting the tables and chairs away.

Regularly Scheduled Events

1. Each Tuesday - 7 p.m. troop meetings including June, July, and August.
2. Usually the 1st Monday of each month- 7 p.m. PLC and Troop Committee Meetings
3. Last Tuesday of each month - Boards of Review during meetings.
4. Courts of Honor - held 3-4 times each year to honor the accomplishments of our Scouts. Parents are always invited and encouraged to attend.
5. Order of the Arrow Chapter Meetings for OA members - held at Concord United Methodist Church every Thursday 7-8 p.m.
6. We do not have troop meetings during the month of December.

Arriving late to Troop Meetings

If you enter the Fellowship Hall or any other room during flag ceremony, PLEASE:

- Stop immediately.
- Stand at attention where you are.
- Stay where you are until the flag ceremony, Scout oath, Scout law, etc. are all completed.

- During announcements you may quietly walk over to your patrol table and stand quietly near your patrol. Please do NOT get a chair until announcements are complete.

Attendance

Our troop meets year round (except December). We attend summer camp in June. If a boy is participating in a sports program we encourage him to attend meetings and outings as often as he can, we also encourage him to stay in Scouts. It can be difficult, but we believe that both Scouting and sports have a place in the life of a boy. Likewise, schoolwork occasionally interferes, but academic work is foremost in a young person's life.

Dues and Fees

Troop fees as of 01-2010 are **\$55.00** per year. This includes troop fees, national dues and Boys Life Magazine. The fee is slightly less for scouts in the same family. These fees are due by the end of January each year, or when a boy joins the troop. The troop pays for BSA insurance out of troop moneys.

Boys Life Magazine

This is a mandatory subscription in our troop. The Troop Committee believes Boys Life magazine has articles and stories of great value to our boys and can lead to a lifetime of reading. It has the added advantage of our troop receiving free rank badges through the Scout Shop because of our 100% Boys Life participation.

Scoutmaster Conference

Requests for Scoutmaster Conference, Board of Review, Merit Badge Information, Troop Leadership Position, Service Hours or any similar type request is required to be made by the scout (and not the parent). This is part of the learning and maturing process required of each young man on the trail to Eagle Scout. The Scoutmaster or any Assistant Scoutmaster can do a Scoutmaster Conference with a Scout.

Board of Review

Scouts should always wear their complete Class A uniform, including neckerchief and merit badge sash (if they have one) when going before a Board of Review. After completing a Scoutmaster's Conference each Scout from the rank of Tenderfoot on goes before a board of three adults within the troop for a Board of Review. At the Board of review we discuss with the scout his achievements, concerns and Scouting career. These are held the last Tuesday of each month. Parents are asked to volunteer to sit in on a Board of Review. There is usually an experienced leader to take the lead. At times a senior Scout will sit in as well.

Code of Conduct

Troop 444 expects members of our troop to live by the Scout Promise and the Scout Law. They are to follow the Outdoor Code. The Senior Patrol Leader and the Scoutmaster are responsible for handling violations. If there is a problem at home, please let the Scoutmaster know as it may be affecting a boy's behavior at troop gatherings.



Uniform

Troop 444's goal is for all Scouts to wear the official uniform to troop meetings, Courts of Honor, while traveling and at the evening meal at summer camp. Only Scouts with their official uniform will be asked to participate in flag ceremonies.

Official Uniform sometimes known as **Class A**, consists of the official shirt, Scout shorts or plain pants, Scout socks (tall or short), belt and a neckerchief. .

The Field Uniform sometimes known as **Class B** Uniform consists of any Boy Scouts of America t-shirts, blue jeans or plain shorts. The jeans or shorts must be appropriate. The Scoutmaster may answer any questions. Many boys enjoy wearing our **troop t-shirt** as well as those from summer camp and other Scouting activities.

Troop 444 uses the official Scout baseball style hat.

Uniform Exchange

To help cut the cost of uniforms for our Scouts, our troop operates an exchange program. Scouts who have outgrown shorts, shirts, pants, belts may give them to our volunteer parent who offers them to any Scout in need of official Scout uniform. Outgrown or replaced equipment may be donated to the troop.



Camping Policy

Troop 444 attempts at least one outing per month. This may be camping, hiking, caving, etc. We meet at Farragut Presbyterian Church, dressed in **Class A uniform shirts** and appropriate pants for the weather. Assume the troop is going unless you have received a phone call or e-mail from an official source. Make sure you have packed according to the weather. The weather changes frequently in Tennessee and in the mountains of Appalachia, so Be Prepared.

Troop Activities Payments and Permission Forms

Please pay and complete all permission forms on time or early! If you are not sure what you need or when you need it, please see the treasurer or assistant treasurer. We are unable to accept late permission form or payment. Please look at the troop calendar and plan accordingly. If a scout or his guardian have paid for a campout or activity and do not show up, money will only be reimbursed to the scout account after the troop has recovered any expenses that they have obligated themselves to pay. Examples of troop expenses that may need to be deducted from the money you receive back are transportation costs, food expenses, deposits on activities, and in some cases entire activity costs. If you are unable to attend please call the person in charge of that activity immediately. The sooner you call the better chance you have of getting some of you money reimbursed. Both the trip coordinator and treasurer must agree that expenses will be credited to the scout account. A generic permission form is available on our web site.

The patrols plan and purchase the food for themselves - always remember proper and safe food handling and cooling methods. Checking the patrol boxes before a campout will ensure that all needed supplies are there. Make sure you have eaten or have a sack supper with you on Friday nights.

Clean-up is the responsibility of each patrol using a duty roster prepared before the campout. The Scouts use the **buddy system** at all times and should never leave the camping area without an adult leader's permission. When appropriate the patrol leader and the Senior Patrol Leader handle problems that occur before being taken to the Scoutmaster.

Our Troop is respectful of other people's property. At no time may a Scout enter another Scout's tent, pack, or footlocker without express permission of the owner.

- Never allow any type of flames in a tent
- Never allow verbal or physical abuse
- Our troop respects "lights out" time (normally 11 p.m.)

In order to not interrupt church services on Sunday, we return after campouts to the Stein Mart parking lot. If we return on Saturday or Sunday afternoon, we will go to the church. Before leaving, all Scouts must make sure they have all of their gear and have been dismissed by the Senior Patrol Leader or the Scoutmaster.

If a boy needs to leave camp with a parent for any reason he must check out with the Scoutmaster or an approved adult before leaving.

Late Pickup

Leaders will wait 10 minutes past the pickup time on the permission slip. If you are not there to pickup your scout, the leader of the outing will take him to the leader's home. You will have to pick up your scout from the leader's home. The late parent will be required to drive on the next activity.

Troop Activity Travel

When we travel, we travel as a group. No one should leave early, except parents that are only transporting their own son(s). They should also checkout with the group leader prior to leaving. Once, they checkout they are no longer part of the group. For everyone else, we travel together. Once a scout is assigned to a vehicle he is required to travel in that same vehicle for the entire activity unless instructed to change vehicles by a leader.

There are many reasons for this:

- Allows for accurate accounting of all scouts and leaders.
- Drivers are accountable for each scout in their vehicle.
- Vehicle breakdowns can be handled as a group.
- Provides for greater opportunity for witnesses to an accident.
- Allows for quick and easy access to medical information and medical permission.
- Someone in the group is trained in CPR and emergency first aid.
- NO SPEEDING – As required by this troop and required by the BSA. Our travel permit states "Do not exceed the speed limit."
- Traveling as a group allows us to be covered under the BSA accident insurance plan.

New Scout Needs

- **Scout Handbook** - This is the main source for learning about Scouting basics: uniform insignia, camping and backpacking checklists, advancement standards and requirements, and the Core of Scouting - The Scout Oath and Scout Law. Always carry a notebook and pencil.
- **Scout Uniform** - See **Uniform**

- **Mess Kit** - This can be an official mess kit or a plate, bowl, cup and eating utensils from home.
- **Hiking Boots** - “**High tops**” are available at a reasonable cost from local stores. There is no need to “upscale” initially. Make sure that the boots are a full size bigger than the usual shoe size, to allow for two pair of socks. Wear cotton or polypropylene socks first, then wool socks. If boots are not an option, the boys need a good fitting, sturdy pair of shoes.
- **Poncho** - **Better than a raincoat** and can double as a ground cloth in emergencies. Rain pants and jacket also work well, particularly when hiking or canoeing in the rain.
- **Sleeping Bag & ground pad**-(waterproof) - Check with the Scoutmaster for recommendations. A “mummy” style is usually preferred by the boys because they are smaller to carry and warmer in cool weather. A sealed foam pad works well under the sleeping bag for year round camping and is a must for winter camping. Sleeping bags are a personal preference item and should probably have a minimum rating of 20 degrees.
- **Tent** – A **three man tent** works best. Check with the Scoutmaster for recommendations.

Check with the patrol leader and Assistant Scoutmasters for information on personal gear. They have experience and information.



Things NOT to bring Camping

- Aerosol cans, lighter fluid, or lighters.
- Electronic Equipment (Gameboys, MP3 players, cell phones, etc.)
- Never use drugs or alcohol at any Scout function.
- Profane language.
- Never use any type of tobacco products. Adults are **strongly discouraged** from using tobacco products at scouting functions.
- Do not bring bows, arrows, slingshots, fireworks or firearms.
- If in doubt, ask the Patrol Leader first, then the Senior Patrol Leader (SPL), then the Scoutmaster.

Knife Policy

No sheath knives, or knives that will not fit into a pocket safely. No exposed blade knives such as carpet knives. No switchblades. The knife blade and handle should not be

any longer than the length of the Scout's hand. Any violation will be confiscated and returned to the parents of the boy by the Scoutmaster. A scout must have earned his totin chip card before handling a knife, axe, hatchet or saw at troop outings.

Equipment Needed For Camping

A good list of personal and patrol equipment that is needed by a boy may be found in the Boy Scout Handbook. Each boy should check with his Patrol Leader for the equipment the troop provides and that which he may borrow or share with another Scout. These items will be discussed before a campout within the patrol or group time during the troop meeting or at outside patrol meetings. The first requirement for Tenderfoot is to present yourself to your leader before going on a camping trip and discuss the proper equipment.

Weather is always taken into consideration when preparing to camp or be outdoors. The weather in East Tennessee changes rapidly. Always pack for the possibility of what may occur. It snows in April, it rains in January, and it's hot in summer.

Ask your son - "Do you have your flashlight?-- Does it work? Do you have extra batteries?"

Troop Committee

All parents are welcome and invited to sit on the troop committee. We have a parent who is Troop Committee Chairperson, and parents who chair committees for Advancement, Fund Raising, Transportation, Communication and others.

Our Committee Chairman plans and runs the troop committee meetings. He/She oversees the troop and assists the Scoutmaster and the troop committee.

Our Advancement Chairman keeps the records of rank and merit badge work and sees that proper forms are turned into the Scout Shop and picks up and organizes the badges that the boys have earned.

Our committee has one person coordinating Merit Badge Counselors and may ask if a parent would lead or assist with merit badges. Boards of Review are conducted on the last troop meeting of each month.

The Fund Raising continues throughout the year with several people taking the lead on different events. Troop 444 has a policy, which helps both the troop and the individual boy earn money. Proceeds from certain fundraisers are split, with 50% going to the troop operating fund and the other 50% divided evenly between the boys who worked the event. These funds are kept on account for the boys within the troop treasury to be used for any Scouting related function. The Troop keeps an accurate accounting on how much each scout has in their account. The money in your scout account is not transferable to another scout or another troop. When a scout turns 18 (unless the scout becomes an

Assistant Scoutmaster) or if the scout leaves Troop 444, then their scout money will go into the troop general fund. Assistant Scoutmasters may still draw upon their account until it is depleted. A request can be made by the scout or parent to the treasurer for these funds to be used toward a scouting event. The more fund raisers the individual scout works, the more money is in his account. Popcorn sales is NOT a troop promoted fund raiser. Scouts that participate in popcorn sales will only receive council prizes. All popcorn sales will be handled through the troop popcorn chair person. All profit from popcorn sales will be entered into Troop 444 general fund.

Service Hours Policy

Service hours are to be approved by the Scoutmaster in advance of the work done. No monetary rewards are to be accepted - that's included in fund raising. Only half of the hours required for rank can be from outside of Troop 444 activities - on approval of the Scoutmaster only, such as helping at church, day camp, WEBELEOS resident camp, or other community activities.

Special Needs

Any Scout or scouting family that needs financial help or has a special needs scout (including physical, mental, financial, special diet, etc) is strongly urged to discuss their personal situation with the Scoutmaster and Committee Chair so we as a troop can work together for long term success.

History of Troop 444

Troop 444 has been chartered since November of 1991 to Farragut Presbyterian Church. The troop started with 5 boys and 3 leaders led by Scoutmaster Farris Ashkar.

Scoutmaster 1991 -1992

Scoutmaster 1992 -1994

Scoutmaster 1994 -2003

Scoutmaster 2004-2008

Scoutmaster 2009 – present

Farris Ashkar

Gary McDaniel

Darrell Sparks

Lew Stoner

Dr. George Keogh

A good program always attracts more people and we increased to 12 boys the next year, to 27 the next. We now have over 70 registered boys in the troop with more Webelos joining every February.

Our troop has 80+ scouts who have received their Eagle Scout Rank.

Please see our Eagle web page for a complete list.

Many more are in the wings planning and working on their projects.

Troop 444 regularly attends spring camporee, summer camp at Camp Buck Toms, and serves Farragut Presbyterian Church by attending Scout Sunday and assisting in landscape maintenance. Our troop enjoys camping, hiking, mountain biking, caving, rappelling, whitewater rafting, canoeing, pioneering activities and many more opportunities offered through the troop. A contingent of 12 boys and 4 adults attended Florida National High Adventure Sea Base in the spring of 1996. Since then we have returned to Sea Base in the spring of 1998 and 2001. We have attended Bahamas Base with a crew of 24 in 2003 and again in 2005. Twelve to Northern Tier High Adventure Canoe Base in 2002 and many more since 2002. We have been to Utah for a week to Snow Ski. We have had scouts attend Philmont Scout Ranch for backpacking adventures. Visited the USS Yorktown aircraft carrier and civil war tour 3 times and the USS Alabama. The troop participates in many high adventure and exciting camping activities.

Boy Scout **Troop 444** is a part of the Toqua District of the Great Smoky Mountain Council. The Council belongs to the Southern Region, Boy Scouts of America. National Headquarters is in Irving, Texas. Our local Scout office is located at 1333 Old Weisgarber Rd, Knoxville, TN 37909, off Middlebrook Pike. The phone number is **(865) 588-6514**. The Scout Shop is located in the office. The number for that is (865) 588-1940.



Troop 444 Organization

