



SQUARE KNOT NOTES

Monthly Edition

From your Sam Houston Area Council Commissioner Team

January 2018

BOBCAT RANK

Regardless of what age or grade a Cub Scout is in, he must earn the Bobcat rank before earning any other rank. The Bobcat requirements focus on the fundamentals of Cub Scouting that every Cub Scout must know.



LION RANK

Lion Scouts is a fun introduction to the Scouting program for kindergarten-age boys eager to get going! Lions do adventures with their adult partners and other Lions every month. This program introduces boys and their families to Scouting and the outdoors as it builds a foundation of character.



Everything as a Lion is done with an adult partner. Sam Houston Area Council is piloting the Lion program in the Orion District this year.

BUYING A GOOD SLEEPING PAD

With so much cool camping gear to choose from, it's easy for the simple sleeping pad to get overlooked. One miserable night's sleep will usually cure that. A good sleeping pad will help you rest well and recover quickly, and it won't slow you down a bit. Here's the Gear Guy's advice for buying the best sleeping pad for your next adventure. Air pads are lightweight inflatable pads which usually "air up" with a few deep breaths. Some are self-inflating, meaning they mostly inflate on their own when unrolled but require a few breaths to firm up. Air pads are lightweight and pack down enough to fit inside your backpack. Closed-cell foam pads are pads which insulate well and are less expensive than air pads. Plus, they're nearly indestructible. But they're also bulkier and usually need to be carried under external straps on a pack rather than inside it. Air mats occasionally puncture and go flat. Many come with a patch kit, but it can be difficult to locate a hole and repair it in the field. A mat's denier rating indicates how strong its fabric is. The lower the rating, the softer, but lighter, the mat will be. The standard size for sleeping pads is 20 x 72 inches. Most manufacturers make a larger size, but it'll cost you. Sleeping pads are not just for padding. They also protect you in chilly temperatures or when you're sleeping on the cold ground. Most sleeping pads use heat-reflective material for added warmth. Some air pads make crunching noises when you shift around on them, which can be an annoyance. For car camping, there's almost no limit on size, so don't fret over buying a lightweight backpacking air pad. A bulky air mattress or old school cot will do the job. Before buying, make sure the mat or pad is comfortable to you. The energy you lose through a bad night's sleep will far exceed the energy you save by carrying a lighter pad on the trail. Make sure you get a pad on which you can sleep comfortably.

HOW TO MAKE A FAST PINEWOOD DERBY CAR

Packs around the country are preparing to hold their annual Pinewood Derby. There are many ways to make your Pinewood Derby car go faster. Here are some of them. Before you begin, consider the following general guidelines: A pointed nose will make it difficult for your Pinewood Derby car to rest on the pin at the starting gate. It may also cause your Pinewood Derby car to get bumped around when the pin drops, and it can create problems for electronic timing systems. In most races, a Pinewood Derby car's weight is limited to 5 ounces. If your car weighs less than that, add coins or other weights. Be sure that it is very clear which end of your Pinewood Derby car is the front. In many races, the race officials will actually place each Pinewood Derby car on the track backward because they can't tell which end is which. Choose a design that allows the air to move over and around the Pinewood Derby car body in a smooth manner. Start with your block of wood, and before you do anything else, bake it in the oven at 250 degrees for around two hours to remove moisture and make it lighter. Draw the outline of your Pinewood Derby car on a sheet of paper, cut it out and attach it to your block of wood. The most basic aerodynamic design is a simple wedge. Use a coping saw to cut out the rough shape of your Pinewood Derby car. Use sandpaper to smooth your car's edges and shape it to your design. An adult can also use a tools to help you. Make it smooth to reduce friction and paint an awesome design to make it look great. You can test the alignment of your axles by pushing your car across a smooth floor or table. It should roll smoothly in a straight line. Glue the axles firmly in their holes to ensure that they stay placed, but make sure you don't get glue on your wheels. Remember to make your Pinewood Derby car as heavy as the rules allow. In general, it's best to place weight to the rear of your car because a heavier rear increases speed. Add graphite or another dry lubricant to reduce friction. And finally, remember the No. 1 rule of a Pinewood Derby is that it's supposed to be fun. While you should always strive to do your best, don't get caught up in winning or having the fastest car. Just enjoy the ride.

Adapted from the book "Pinewood Derby Speed Secrets," DK Publishing, \$12.95 softcover.

CALENDAR

- 1/13 Key Leader's Conference
- 1/23 Venturing Forum
- 1/25 Scout Fair Kickoff
- 1/27 Scouting for Food Door Hanger Day
- 2/3 Scouting for Food Pickup Day
- 2/4 Scout Sunday
- 2/10 Council First Aid Meet
- 2/10 ScoutBook Training

UNIT STRONG

Strong units should be working with their Unit Commissioners to complete the detailed assessment. The deadline for completing the detailed assessment is March 31, 2018. Completing this assessment will help the unit to determine their strengths and areas to be strengthened.

Have a great idea, pressing concern, success story? Email squareknotnotes@yahoo.com. We serve *you*!
Do you call communication feedback a gift? It truly is!