



Junior Girl Scout Troop 878

Parent Handbook

2003-2004

Welcome to another year of Girl Scouting! We are really looking forward to our last year as Junior Girl Scouts and preparing the girls to bridge to Cadette Girl Scouts in the spring. This handout will cover much of the basic information regarding Troop 878. Please keep it and refer to it if you have any questions throughout the year. A .pdf copy of this document will also be available on the Troop's web site – www.geocities.com/troop878/.

Introductions –

Lori Bell, Leader. My scouting experience began when I joined Brownies in 1968. I remained a youth member until 1972. I am beginning my 5th year as an adult member. In addition to serving as troop leader, I am a member of the Mercury Service Unit Team serving as Registrar, Service Unit Cookie Manager and South Brevard Association Delegate. You can reach me at 953-0148 or troop878@yahoo.com.

Mary Wells, Co-Leader. Mary is beginning her 2nd year as an adult member. In addition to serving as troop co-leader, Mary is also a member of the Mercury Service Unit Team serving as Product Sales Manager. You can reach Mary at 953-3573 or rwells1@cfl.rr.com.

Both Mary and I have completed all three levels of Basic Leader Training. In addition, I have completed 1st Aid and CPR, Outdoor Progression Training (OPT) and Basic Troop Camping (BTC). In order to keep Scouting interesting for the girls, we intend to complete additional training this year. Mary has planned to attend both OPT and BTC. I plan to attend American Red Cross Canoeing Instructor Certification training, Intermediate Troop Camping and American Red Cross Lifeguard Certification training.

Registration – If your daughter did not register in the Spring, you will need to complete and return a Girl Registration Form (It is attached if one is required for your Girl Scout.) Please note that the Registration fee has been increased to \$10.00. (Some forms may still indicate the old fees.) Please return the registration form along with the fee no later than the September 15th meeting. If paying by check, please make it payable to “Girl Scout Troop 878”. Also, please be sure to complete the Health History information on the reverse side of the last sheet. Since this is a multi-part carbon-less form, please separate one side of the pink page and flip it over separately before completing that section of the form. Financial aid is available for those in need. If you would like a financial aid form, please see me.

Meeting Dates and Times - Our troop holds regular meetings on the **1st and 3rd Monday of each month**. We do not meet on school holidays so there may be months when the regular meeting dates will be altered. I have secured the cafeteria as our meeting location. We meet immediately after school until 5:00 p.m. the first regular meeting for girls will be September 15th. I will have a planning calendar available for each girl with meeting dates recorded at that time. The planning calendar will also be published on the troop web site at www.geocities.com/troop878/.

On the **2nd and 4th Mondays**, except those that fall on school holidays, we will have an optional **Badge Activity Day**. This will also be held in the cafeteria immediately after school until 5:00 p.m. This is time for your scout to work independently or in small groups on badges and signs. I would ask that your scout come prepared to work and have her badge book or other suitable outline **and a snack** with her.

Five Mondays – Do we meet? The only months with five Mondays for the 03-04 school year will be December, March and May and in all of those the 5th Monday falls on a school holiday – no meeting.

Dues are \$3.00 a month. This may be subject to change, depending on nature of the activities the girls select. Generally, our dues are collected to cover awards, recognition patches and craft supplies for the entire year.

Absence from meetings. Please notify Mary or me as far in advance as possible if your daughter will be absent so that we will have only the needed supplies on hand. This is especially important when planning large projects or projects which require a lot of pre-meeting preparations. Since dues are collected to cover activities for the entire year, and not just the current month, we ask that you be responsible for dues even if your daughter has been absent.

Snacks - A snack schedule will be annotated on the planning calendar that will be given to your scout at the first regular meeting. Please note the dates you have been assigned to provide snacks. If your schedule will not allow you to supply the snack on your scheduled day, please let me know as far in advance as possible. Please provide a drink, cups if needed, and something fun to munch. I keep a supply of paper towels and baby wipes with the troop's meeting supplies. At this time, there are no girls with known food allergies. If needed, I will be sure to let all parents know for snack planning purposes.

Troop Leadership – Junior Girl Scout troops are governed by the girls based on one of the following systems: The Patrol System, for large groups, or the Executive Board or Town Meeting for small groups. We use the Town Meeting format. One girl will be selected to serve as Moderator for the business portion of the meeting. I will provide the moderator with a meeting outline and assist her as needed. Each scout in the troop will have the opportunity to serve as moderator as leadership experience and development is a key portion of many of the badges and awards. Girls also serve as Scribe, taking attendance and notes when needed, and Treasurer, writing out receipts for monies received and giving the treasurer's report. These duties are rotated among the girls so that each has a turn in at least two of the positions.

Uniform & Books - A uniform is not required to participate in Girl Scouts. You are, however, encouraged to purchase at least a vest or sash, unit numerals and council identification. An American flag patch and a pin holder tab are optional items. The uniform policy of WMSS states that students may wear a Scout uniform to school on meeting days for meetings immediately after school. In the past they have asked that with the exception of the vest or sash, you not mix the school uniform and the scout uniform components. For example, you cannot wear a WMSS shirt with a GS skort or a GS shirt with WMSS shorts. It is also my understanding that the school staff has stated that with the exception of socks, if your child wishes to wear a GS uniform to school, it must be a complete uniform, not uniform pieces mixed with street clothes. I am happy to sew items on for you if needed. For information on where to place insignia, badges and awards on the uniform please visit <http://jfg.girlscouts.org/GS/Uniforms/JrVest/jv0.htm>.

It is also not required that your Scout have her own books, but they are pretty much necessary if your daughter is interested in earning badges on her own. It is best to have both, but if only purchasing one book, please consider the Badge Book.

All of these can be purchased at Turner's Department Store or WalMart in Indian Harbour Beach (if shopping at WalMart, numerals and council identification are available in the layaway department.)

Membership Pins – The troop will purchase a World Association of Girl Scouts and Girl Guides (WAGGS) pin, a Traditional Girl Scout pin, and a membership star with yellow disc for all girls in the troop. One membership pin will be purchased by the troop for each year the girl is member of the troop. If the girl has a vest or a sash, the troop will also purchase a troop crest.

Badges - Junior Girl Scouts are eligible to earn over 100 badges covering a number of different topics. We will be working on a limited number of badges as a group during the year including *Girl Scouting in My Future* and *The Cookie Connection*. The girls will select other badges at the parent/leader meeting. To make the selection process easier, I will have a pre-selected a group of badges that are practical to our meeting setting and geographic area. There is also space provided for girls to write-in their own choices. From those the girls will each select four. The four most popular badges selected will be the badges we will work to complete this year.

Missed Badge Work – Girls are more than welcome to complete missed badge work, either at home or on a Badge Activity day. Once the badge is completed, it will be ordered for the next awards ceremony. If the requirement was to have made an item, write of poem or story, it should be brought in for “show and tell”.

Independent Badge Work – The girls are encouraged to work on badges independently if they so choose. However, we ask that they not work on the badges that the troop has selected before they are presented to the troop. Your scout does not have to complete every badge she begins and it is perfectly okay for her to move around the book and complete projects that appeal to her.

Recording Completed Badge Work – It will be very important for your scout to bring her Badge Book to troop meetings so that her individual progress may be recorded. To earn a badge on her own, your scout must complete six of the listed activities for that badge. There is a section in the back of the Badge Book where badge progress is recorded. Please have her use it. **It is the record we use to record completed work.** This is also where you will initial completed work. Badges earned independently will not be ordered unless they have been recorded and initialed by a parent in the Badge Book. If extra room is needed, please staple additional pages inside the back cover. I would really like to see what the girls have made if there was a requirement to have made an item. Please encourage them to bring in for “show and tell”.

Signs - Besides badges, Junior Girl Scouts are also eligible to earn four signs. These signs are based on the program goals of Junior Girl Scouting and can be found in the back of the Junior Girl Scout handbook. They are the Sign of the Star (becoming your best), the Sign of the Rainbow (building relationships), the Sign of the Sun (values), and the Sign of the World (making the world a better place). It is also my goal that the girls will earn The Sign of the Star as a group this year.

Junior Aide Award – This award gives Junior Girl Scouts the opportunity to test their leadership skills by working with the younger girls. WMSS has several younger troops who are willing to accept the assistance of those girls who are interested in earning this award. Briefly, the requirements are that the girl coordinate their participation with the appropriate troop leader and assist her with at least 3 meetings. If your daughter has not earned this award, and is interested, please let me know.

Other Awards - Junior Girl Scouts are also eligible to earn *The Junior Girl Scout Leadership Award*, the *Girl Scout Bronze Award*, and the Junior Girl Scout Safety Award. Information on the first two can be found in the back of the Junior Girl Scout Handbook. Both of these awards require a specific number of community service hours and a commitment above that needed for badge work. Given that, we will not be working toward those awards as a troop. If your daughter is interested in earning either of these awards and needs help or ideas, please let me know. We will be completing the requirements for the Junior Girl Scout Safety Award as a troop. Girls are also eligible to earn awards according to their faith. If you would like more information on the award pertaining to your faith, please let me know and I will give you the information on how to obtain the award requirements.

Recognition Patches - are "unofficial" patches and are worn on the back of the vest or sash. Such patches include cookies and calendar sales and sports patches.

Ceremonies – We will have several small award ceremonies during the year so that the girls may wear their badges and recognition patches as they earn them. Our troop ceremonies are usually very informal and held during our regular meeting times.

Replacement Insignia and Recognitions – Replacement items, if available, will only be purchased upon request. Parents are responsible for the cost of any replacement items.

Product Sales

QSP and Calendar Sales (Fall) and **Cookie Sales** (Spring). Product sales are the source of the majority of the troop's income. Please help support your daughter in her sales efforts. **Participation in the Cookie Sale and at least one other troop fundraising project is required in order to participate in the trip to Savannah**

Service Projects – I am proposing we participate in Goodwill Good Turn Days as our Council Service Project. I am also very excited about having the girls participate in the *Service to America* project with the National Park

Service at Canaveral National Seashore. Twelve hours of service is required to earn the patch and since it is mostly beach clean up and trail maintenance activities, we will be accomplishing this in the winter months. For program info go to www.servicetoamerica.org/beta/girlscouts/gsusaindex.html. In order to participate, you and your daughter must sign the troop agreement form on page 6.

Savannah – Our Savannah trip is set for XX, 2004. This trip is to the Mecca of Girl Scouting, the birthplace of founder Juliette Gordon Low and is visited by Girl Scouts from all over the world. We will tour the birthplace and participate in an activity at the home. We have reservations for 8 girls and 2 adults for the tour. Travel plans, hotel accommodations, meal plans, and the opportunity for other activities will need to be made as soon as we have our cookie income established. If your daughter will not be attending, we need to know as soon as possible. Troop funds will be used to pay for our group activities and accommodations. Since many of the activities require non-refundable deposits, I felt that a \$50 troop security deposit was necessary to safeguard troop funds. We also have a participation contract that **MUST** be signed by the girl and a parent. Specific information pertaining to the security deposit and the cancellation policy can be found on the participation contract. A copy is attached on page 7.

Troop Camping and Camporee – Page 5 of this booklet is a sheet on *Personal Equipment for Troop Camping*. Please familiarize yourself with the list. All girls are **required** to pack their personal gear in a 5-gallon plastic bucket. These can be purchased at Wal-Mart, Home Depot or Lowe's. Each bucket must also have a lid that can **easily removed by the girl**. Home Depot and Lowe's both sell black plastic lids that are made to be bucket seats. I highly recommend them. Lowe's also sells a divided plastic organizer that will fit into the top of the bucket and will work as a seat top. You are also free to make one if you wish. The girls will not be allowed to bring suitcases, backpacks or other luggage items on camping trips – only their bucket, sleeping bag and pillows. No personal electronic devices will be allowed. This includes cellular phones. You will be given my cell phone number prior to our trip and the girls will be allowed to call home from it if needed. The troop will also have a designated emergency contact, which is not traveling with the troop, that you may contact at any time. The Mercury Service Unit organizes one or two camporees each year. I am hoping to get the girls out a few times as a troop while working on the Service to America project. (See the section on Service Projects on the previous page.)

Bridging to Cadette Girl Scouts – The 6th grade girls in the troop will be bridging into Cadette Girl Scouts at the end of the school year. The 5th graders will have the option of staying Juniors for another year or bridging to Cadettes with us. This is entirely up to you and your daughter. Please be aware however, that Troop 878 will be a Cadette troop for the 2004-2005 school year. I will assist you in finding a Junior troop for the 2004-2005 school year if your daughter wishes to continue as a Junior Girl Scout. It is not a decision that needs to be made right away and many factors need to be considered by each girl and her family.

I have tried to address many of the common questions in this handout. If you have any questions or need to contact us - please feel free to do so. Our home phone number and e-mail address can be found in the introduction on page one. We very much look forward to a great year of Girl Scouting with your daughters!

Lori and Mary