



# NEWSLETTER

APRIL - May 2024



## Contents

Pinewood Derby at  
Woodfield Mall  
Scout Spotlight  
Leader's Corner

And more!



# Council Updates

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## 2024 Annual Membership Fee Update

Effective May 1, 2024, the BSA will eliminate the \$25 one-time joining fee for new program participants in Cub Scouts, Scouts BSA, Venturing and Sea Scouting.

- \$85/yr for Cub Scouts, Scouts BSA, Venturing and Sea Scouting participants (\$5 increase)
- \$65/yr for all adult volunteers (\$5 increase)
- \$30/yr for Scoutreach (No change in fee)
- \$25/yr for Merit Badge Counselors (No change in fee. Only for Merit Badge Counselors not already registered as leaders)
- \$50/yr for Exploring participants Youth & Adult (No change in fee)
- \$100/yr unit renewal/affiliation fee (No change in fee)
- \$15/yr for Scout Lifemagazine (No change in fee)

## District Executive Minute

Hi all, don't forget that The Cub Scout program is set to receive significant updates for the 2024-25 program year, targeting areas for improvement identified through feedback from over 23,000 parents and leaders. These enhancements focus on four main areas: the Bobcat badge, Cub Scout Adventures, Webelos, and Cub Scout Awards. Key changes include making the Bobcat badge a yearly adventure with age-appropriate requirements, restructuring Cub Scout Adventures for easier delivery, separating Webelos and Arrow of Light programs, and reimagining Cub Scouts Awards as elective Adventures. These updates are scheduled to take effect on June 1, 2024. For more detailed information, visit the official announcement on the Boy Scouts of America website. -John

# Pinewood Derby at Woodfield Mall

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In a spectacular display of creativity, sportsmanship, and excitement, the Cub Scouts of our district gathered at Woodfield Mall for an unforgettable Pinewood Derby event. The energy was palpable as young scouts, their families, and curious onlookers filled the mall, eagerly anticipating the thrilling races that were about to unfold. The event garnered significant attention, with WGN, one of Chicago's leading news stations, covering the story and capturing the infectious enthusiasm of the scouts and their supporters. The coverage highlighted the incredible turnout, with scouts from across the district coming together to celebrate the spirit of friendly competition and camaraderie that lies at the heart of scouting.



**[Click here to view the WGN News Coverage](#)**

As the races unfolded, the mall echoed with cheers and applause, as scouts, parents, and spectators alike marveled at the ingenuity and determination displayed by each participant. The sleek, colorful cars zipped down the track, propelled by the hopes and dreams of their young creators. Whether crossing the finish line first or not, every scout emerged a winner, having experienced the joy of participation, the satisfaction of seeing their hard work come to life, and the unwavering support of their fellow scouts and community.

The resounding success of the Pinewood Derby at Woodfield Mall would not have been possible without the tireless efforts and dedication of our incredible volunteers. These unsung heroes worked behind the scenes, ensuring that every aspect of the event ran smoothly, from setting up the track and organizing the races to providing guidance and encouragement to the scouts. To our volunteers, we extend our deepest gratitude and appreciation. Your selfless service embodies the very best of the scouting spirit, and your contributions have left an indelible mark on the lives of the scouts you have touched. Through your efforts, you have not only helped to create a fantastic event but also fostered an atmosphere of unity, support, and shared purpose that will continue to inspire and guide our scouts on their journey through life.

# Pinewood Derby at Woodfield Mall

## Pinewood Derby Mania Takes Over Woodfield Mall!

Young Cub Scouts and their families gather to watch the excitement unfold as meticulously crafted derby cars race down the track, filling the mall with cheers and a contagious spirit of friendly competition.



## Unleashing the Need for Speed: Derby Tips from the Pros!

Our resident Pinewood Derby expert shares insider secrets with eager Cub Scouts at the tips and tricks table, teaching them the art of crafting lightning-fast cars by mastering friction and other key strategies for racing success.

## Life-Size Derby Thrills: Racing Dreams Come to Life!

Scouts and shoppers alike marvel at the awe-inspiring, full-scale Pinewood Derby car on display, igniting imaginations and bringing the excitement of the race to new heights as this engineering marvel takes center stage at Woodfield Mall.



# District Program Calendar

## Day Camp – Cub Scout Summer Games August 8th 2024 Schaumburg, IL.

Get ready for an unforgettable Saturday filled with thrilling activities and new friendships at the 2024 Cub Scout Day Camp! This summer, Cub Scouts, their siblings, and friends entering 1st through 5th grade will have the opportunity to participate in a wide array of exciting challenges. From athletic competitions and target sports to creative engineering projects and outdoor games, there's something for everyone to enjoy. Don't miss out on this chance to create lasting memories while developing new skills and having a blast. Register now and receive a complimentary Day Camp t-shirt and patch!



**Register here today!**  
<https://scoutingevent.com/456-DayCamp2024>



## Trailblazer District Cub Scout Summer Fun – August 26th

Dive into the heart of summer fun at the Cub Scout Summer Fun Day, happening Saturday, August 24th, from 9 AM to 12 noon at Plum Grove Reservoir Park, Palatine, IL! Open to boys and girls aged 5-10, this vibrant event welcomes current Cub Scouts and families eager to explore the world of scouting. Engage in a variety of activities, from thrilling obstacle courses and innovative STEM experiments to serene fishing and spirited fitness competitions like a 50-yard dash. For a minimal fee of \$6, Cub Scouts will not only partake in these exciting adventures but also receive a special event patch. Parents and non-scouts can enjoy all these activities for FREE! Remember to come dressed for the weather and bring a filled water bottle to stay hydrated throughout this action-packed morning of fun, learning, and camaraderie.

**Registration page coming**

# District Program Calendar

## **Webelos Unplugged - September 20th to 22nd**

Dive into the great outdoors with "Webelos Unplugged," our annual flagship event at the serene Camp Tomo Chi-Chi Knolls, where Webelos Scouts have the unique opportunity to camp alongside various Scouts BSA troops from across the district. This event is a pivotal step towards Scouts BSA advancements, providing Webelos Scouts a head start on their requirements while gaining invaluable camping experience. More than that, it's a perfect setting to meet and interact with local Scouts BSA troops, helping Webelos Scouts to find a troop that feels like home. Whether you're eager to learn new skills, excited about making new friends, or both, "Webelos Unplugged" is your gateway to a bigger scouting adventure.

**Registration page coming**



# District Program Calendar

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## First Aid Meet

December 7th 2024

Mark your calendars for December 7th and gear up for this year's First Aid Meet. Previously held at Harper College, Scout Patrols and Webelos Dens will face off in a series of first aid scenarios and activities, testing their skills for a chance to win the prestigious travelling First Aid Meet Trophy. With a fresh and thrilling theme awaiting, participants will also earn a special patch to proudly display on their uniforms. Prepare to showcase your knowledge and teamwork by brushing up on the Scouts BSA handbook and First Aid merit badge pamphlet.



**Registration page coming**

## Klondike Derby

January 16-17th 2025



Get ready for a frosty adventure at our Klondike Derby, set for January 16th to 17th, 2025! This spirited competition harks back to the Klondike Gold Rush, challenging Scout troops and Webelos Dens to navigate snowy terrains with sleds, testing their skills in survival, navigation, and teamwork across various stations. It's an exhilarating opportunity to embrace the winter elements, foster camaraderie, and showcase scouting prowess. So, bundle up and prepare your sleds for this unforgettable journey of endurance and adventure. The 2025 Klondike Derby awaits your courage and determination!

**Registration page coming**

# Community Partners

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## Schaumburg AM Rotary



The Schaumburg-Hoffman Estates AM Rotary Club recently hosted the 2024 Souper Bowl of Soups, a exciting evening that not only tantalized taste buds with an array of soups but also united the community under the banner of making a difference. This heartwarming event spotlighted the District 211 Culinary Pathway Program students from Palatine, Conant, and Schaumburg High Schools, who wowed attendees with their culinary wizardry, serving up bowls brimming with creativity and flavor. The fundraiser was more than just a feast; it was a testament to the Rotary's unwavering commitment to nurturing local talent and tackling community challenges head-on. In partnership with the Trailblazer district, the Schaumburg-Hoffman Estate AM Rotary Club's efforts shine as a beacon of leadership and personal development, illuminating the path for young individuals to grow and thrive.

For more information on the , please visit: <https://schaumburgamrotary.org/>

## Palatine Rotary



The Rotary Club of Palatine is celebrating its 60th anniversary, marking over half a century of community service and international cooperation. Founded in 1964, the club has been a pivotal part of Palatine's civic landscape, involved in both local and global projects, including efforts to eradicate polio and provide clean water abroad. The club is also a proud charter sponsor of 4 Scout units in the Trailblazer District, demonstrating their commitment to youth development and leadership. For their 60th year, they continue to host the Palatine Oktoberfest, a key community event and their primary fundraiser. This annual festival not only raises significant funds for various charitable causes but also strengthens community ties, celebrating local culture and fellowship.

For more details, visit their official website at [www.PalatineRotary.com](http://www.PalatineRotary.com)



# Community Partners

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## Citizens for Conservation



The Citizens for Conservation (CFC) is a beacon of environmental stewardship in northeastern Illinois, dedicated to the preservation and restoration of the region's natural habitats. Operating from Barrington, Illinois, CFC is a volunteer-driven nonprofit organization that manages over 777 acres across 14 nature preserves. Their mission encompasses land acquisition, habitat restoration, and public education, aiming to protect and restore native plant communities. By engaging the community through educational programs and hands-on restoration workdays, CFC plays a pivotal role in enhancing biodiversity and promoting environmental health in the area. Their efforts offer a unique opportunity for individuals and groups to contribute to meaningful conservation work, making a positive impact on the local ecosystem.

Scout groups, in particular, can find a wealth of engagement opportunities with CFC that align with the BSA's emphasis on outdoor ethics and community service. Participating in habitat restoration projects, educational workshops, and conservation efforts provides scouts with invaluable hands-on experience in environmental stewardship. These activities not only contribute to the scouts' personal growth and understanding of ecological principles but also support CFC's broader mission to protect and educate about the region's natural heritage. By collaborating with CFC, scout groups can play an active role in local conservation initiatives, fostering a deeper connection to the natural world and instilling a lifelong commitment to environmental responsibility.

For more information on ways to get involved, please contact Allison Frederick at [Allison.Frederick@citizensforconservation.org](mailto:Allison.Frederick@citizensforconservation.org)

# Scout Spotlight

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**Sridutt R.**

**Troop 964 - Lake Zurich, IL.**

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Welcome to our Scout Spotlight, where today we feature Sridutt, a recent recipient of the Scouts BSA program's highest youth award: Eagle Scout. Sridutt is a scout whose journey beautifully encapsulates the essence of scouting: adventure, growth, and community service.

As a member of Troop 964 in Lake Zurich, he began his journey quietly, observing the world around him with a reserved curiosity. His initial shyness was a barrier he overcame through the scouting community, which taught him the value of connection and active citizenship. "Before I became a Scout, I was very timid and didn't know much about others around me," Sridutt shares. Through his involvement, he not only learned about his community but also how to contribute to it meaningfully.

The scouting experience offered Sridutt a unique perspective on life, one that was significantly different from his pre-scouting days. The nights spent camping under the vast, starlit sky were not just a scouting activity but a gateway to a larger world of beauty and tranquility. "In clear-skied nights, the night sky is so beautiful. I remember being up for so long just to stare at the stars," he reminisces. These moments of reflection under the stars were pivotal in shaping his appreciation for nature and the outdoors.

His love for exploration and adventure was further nurtured through challenging activities like the memorable hike at Starved Rock. Covering approximately 13 miles of trails, Sridutt and his friends experienced the raw beauty of nature while forging strong friendships. "One of my all-time favorites has to be the Starved Rock hike we did, as all of the natural terrain was so amazing to explore," he recounts. This experience was not just about the physical challenge but also about the shared sense of achievement and the joy of discovery with his peers.



Scouting has been more than just a hobby for Sridutt; it has been a catalyst for personal development and leadership. The skills and values instilled through his scouting experiences have shaped him into a proactive individual, keen on making a positive impact. "My goal in life is to be able to help anyone I can," he states, reflecting the core of scouting's influence on his aspirations. Whether it's building a table or living by the Scout Oath and Law, Sridutt's commitment to service is unwavering.

# Scout Spotlight

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**Sridutt R.**

**Troop 964 - Lake Zurich, IL.**

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The principles of scouting have also provided Sridutt with a framework for life. The Scout handbook, while initially daunting, became a source of knowledge and guidance. "The Scout handbook is large, full of knowledge but scary to think about," he admits. Yet, as he delved deeper into its pages, he found that it wasn't just a book but a guide to understanding the world around him. This gradual mastery of scouting knowledge has empowered him to navigate life's challenges with confidence.

Moreover, scouting has imbued Sridutt with a sense of responsibility and leadership that extends beyond his troop. He has learned to lead by example and inspire others through his actions and dedication. The impact of scouting on Sridutt is evident in his approach to life—thoughtful, resourceful, and community-oriented. It's a testament to how the scouting experience can transform one's outlook and equip them with the tools to lead a fulfilling life.

Sridutt's ambitions are not confined to the boundaries of scouting. His creative spirit and love for innovation find expression in his hobbies outside the organization. "Outside of Scouting, I love to create different things," he explains, revealing a passion for crafting and building that complements his scouting activities. Whether it's assembling random materials into something new or engaging in water sports, Sridutt's interests are a testament to his versatile and exploratory nature.

In the aquatic sphere, Sridutt's goals are equally clear and service-oriented. As a swimming instructor and water polo enthusiast, he seeks to impart knowledge and foster skills in others. His involvement in these activities is more than recreational; it's an extension of his scouting philosophy—to learn, to teach, and to serve.

As Sridutt stands at the threshold of new adventures and challenges, his journey through scouting remains a testament to the transformative power of this global brotherhood. His story is a vivid mosaic of campfires, starlit skies, and the bonds of friendship forged along the trails. With a heart set on service and a mind enriched by the diverse experiences scouting has offered, Sridutt moves forward, carrying the timeless values of scouting into every endeavor. "My goal in life is to be able to help anyone I can," he affirms, a pledge that echoes the essence of the Scout Law and the spirit of the community he cherishes. May his path be guided by the stars he so loves to gaze upon, and may his actions inspire a legacy as enduring as the constellations above.

**Have a Scout Spotlight story you'd like to share?**

**Reach out to us at  
[trailblazernewsletter@pathwaytoadventure.org](mailto:trailblazernewsletter@pathwaytoadventure.org)**

# Leader's Corner

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## Erik Hildebrandt

In every corner of the Boy Scouts of America, you will find countless dedicated leaders working tirelessly to guide, mentor, and inspire young minds. In this edition of the "Leader's Corner," we have the privilege of exploring the remarkable story of Erik Hildebrandt, Scoutmaster from Troop 209, whose unwavering commitment to the scouting movement has left an indelible mark on the lives of countless scouts and their communities.

Born and raised in the community of Morton Grove, IL, this leader's love for scouting was sparked by the captivating tales his father shared from his days in a church-based scouting unit called Brigade back in the 1950s. "My dad was part of a church based scouting unit called Brigade back in the 1950s. He told me about all the cool things they used to do in the woods and camping," he fondly recalls. "I remember bringing home a yellow piece of paper one day with the Wolf Patch on it. My parents filled out a form and I joined Den 1, Pack 228 as a Wolf Cub. Had a lot of fun, I liked wearing my uniform to school on Fridays, showing off my arrowheads and beads to my friends. The most memorable outings were goofing around in front of a green screen at WGN and visiting The MIX 101.9FM in Skokie to see how TV and radio stations worked. We all earned our Arrow of Light and Bridged into Eagle Patrol, Troop 45 in Niles."



When asked about the driving force behind his commitment to being a scout leader, he passionately shared, "Teaching youth to overcome failure and learn to be active leaders. I love camping and helping youth discover new things, both in skills but more so about how they can push themselves to achieve more." This sentiment lies at the very heart of his leadership philosophy, which revolves around empowering the youth to take charge of their own journey, fostering a deep sense of accountability, and embracing failure as a crucial opportunity for growth and self-discovery. "Leadership is a muscle. As you practice leading you get better, stop leading and you begin to lose it," he wisely notes, his words echoing the importance of continuous leadership development and the vital role it plays in shaping the character of young scouts.

# Leader's Corner

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**Erik Hildebrandt**

"The youth LEAD. Most decisions, unless safety is a factor, are made by the youth," he affirms. "Once a scout is elected to a leadership position in the troop, the message they hear and see from me is servant leadership. Putting the troop's needs before their own."

Accountability, in this Erik's eyes, is not just a buzzword, but a fundamental pillar of his leadership approach. "The youth will achieve more than they think they can if we don't lower the bar," he states. "We teach our scouts that leadership starts with leading themselves. It is their responsibility to be on time, in proper uniform (tucked in), bring your Scout Handbook regardless of rank, and control themselves physically. This is where leadership starts, with you. From there we encourage teamwork. It's reflected in our Troop Organizational chart, the flow of accountability from the newest scout through the Patrol Leaders and other positions leaders, to the Assistant Senior Patrol Leaders, Senior Patrol Leader, to the Scoutmaster."

Failure, in this visionary leader's perspective, is not something to be feared or avoided, but rather an invaluable opportunity for growth, learning, and self-discovery. "When scouts or scouters fail, when the troop fails... GOOD. This is the best opportunity to grow. We can learn a significant amount about ourselves and our skills when we fail," he emphasizes.

"Circle the wagons, help them up, brush them off, and talk it through. What went wrong. How do we fix it? What did we learn? This circles back to accountability."

When asked about his most memorable experiences in scouting, this leader's face lights up with a mixture of pride and nostalgia. "Philmont in 2023 with my two sons. Nothing better than standing on top of Baldy looking down at what you overcame to reach the summit, a memory we can share for a lifetime," he recounts, his voice filled with emotion. He also fondly remembers the Fall Camporee of 2019 at Busse Woods, describing it as a "great experience for scouts to see what all the BSA has to offer."

Looking to the future, this visionary leader has ambitious goals for Troop 209 and the broader scouting community. "We have been working towards being a fully scout led troop. Where the PLC is empowered to make the choices and decisions necessary to keep the troop running. We are almost there," he shares, his eyes sparkling with excitement and determination. "More community involvement to highlight the scouting movement in the communities our troop serves. All ASMs trained. 80% of youth ILST trained. 10% NYLT. JTE Gold - every year."

Beyond the internal workings of the troop, he aspires to increase community involvement, highlighting the scouting movement and its positive impact on the lives of young people and the communities they serve.

Continued on next page...

# Leader's Corner

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**Erik Hildebrandt**

"We do a lot of elementary and Jr High events in Palatine, participate in parades, Oktoberfest, service projects for churches, and schools. We have just started a program at a retirement village playing games and reading with residents. Servant Leadership at its core is about helping other people. Showing the youth different ways of serving helps keep them engaged and aware of the multitude of opportunities available to youth and adults. The community in turn sees the youth caring. In our current social economic climate, giving back and serving those around us is a very strong recruiting tool for the packs and troops. Our involvement may not bring more youth to the troop directly, but we often interact with young kids and parents referring them to the Packs."

At the very essence of scouting, Erik believes, lies the power to empower youth and unlock their full potential. "Give youth confidence to explore the outdoors, career fields, and develop leadership skills in a fun place where failure is accepted and used to better themselves and those around them," he articulates, his words painting a vivid picture of the profound impact scouting can have on personal and community development.

As we celebrate the tireless efforts and unwavering dedication of scout leaders like the Erik Hildebrandt, Scoutmaster of Troop 209, let us remember the vital role they play in shaping the lives of our youth and building stronger, more resilient communities.

Through their guidance, mentorship, and unwavering commitment to the scouting movement, they are not just teaching skills and facilitating adventures, but also igniting the spark of leadership, compassion, and service that will burn brightly in the hearts of scouts for generations to come. In the words of this inspiring leader, "Be yourself with the youth. Emotionally be a duck. As we have discussed with our scouts in Troop meetings, your EGO is your worst enemy. Keep it in your pocket." With leaders like him at the helm, the future of scouting shines bright, promising a world where young people are empowered to lead, serve, and make a lasting difference in their communities and beyond. As he so aptly puts it, "I have a great group of scouts, ASMs, and parents I get to work with. Troop 209 has a lot of moving parts, day in and day out. The most significant challenge has been returning to a Scout-Led Troop post pandemic. It's a tough road, I like the meme my daughter sent me, 'I'm a Scoutmaster, my weekends are planned by 14 year olds.'"

**Have a Leader's Corner story you'd like to share?**

**Reach out to us at  
[trailblazernewsletter@pathwaytoadventure.org](mailto:trailblazernewsletter@pathwaytoadventure.org)**

# Thank you!



Have a unit announcement you'd like to advertise? We'd love to have it in the next newsletter!

Have a story, feedback, or suggestions for ways to improve the newsletter?

Drop us an email here:  
[trailblazernewsletter@pathwaytoadventure.org](mailto:trailblazernewsletter@pathwaytoadventure.org)