

ScoutSite
Webmaster's Guide
(for software revision 1.3)

Revision 1.0, February 2008



DecisionDesign
C O R P O R A T I O N

2201 Waukegan Rd., Suite 140
Bannockburn, IL 60015

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Foreword

As a long term ScoutSite user and scouter, I decided to include writing this Webmaster's guide when drafting my Woodbadge ticket (course NE-I-246). Keep in mind as you use this guide that it is not just written to show how the software works; that's usual for a user's guide. And, it is not just written to help you reach your goals; that's typical for an "idiot's guide". Rather, I have tried to provide those plus identify goals you should have for using your Website to help your scout unit.

The views expressed by the author are not the responsibility of, nor are they necessarily endorsed by Decision Design Corporation.

Yours in Scouting,

David Skolnick, SM (and WM) Troop 105, Pembroke, MA

About the Author

David Skolnick works as a technical writer for Analog Devices, Inc. He holds a BSEET and MTPW from Northeastern University. His scouting background is: Arrow of Light, Eagle scout, Ner Tamid religious award, Cubscouter knot, Scout Leader Training knot, Unit Commissioner Arrowhead honor, and was recently selected for Vigil honor in the Tisquantum lodge of the Order of the Arrow.

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1 INTRODUCTION


A while ago, Decision Design noticed a trend among its employees that were scouting parents. Any time the mention of Scouts and Websites came up, there was a collective groan. Some parents had sites that were maintenance headaches. My son's Pack didn't have a site at all and was trying to figure out how to get one built.

Decision Design is a software company, in business for the past 13 years. Much of our work is in Web-based software development. As one of our Scout dads began to update his Boy Scout unit's site, we had an “Ah-Ha” moment. We could put some of our resources to work building a user-friendly Website template that all of our employees could use for their units. We considered it a great way to give back to our communities.

Now, if you know anything about software developers, you know that nothing can ever be done “little”. Before we knew it, our pet “Scout Project” was a full fledged software product, easy to set up for any unit and user friendly enough that anyone could add content. When we debuted it to the scout parents of our employees, they loved it.

At that point, we saw an opportunity to kill two birds with one stone. We could expose potential clients to our company's capabilities while supporting the Scouts by taking our offer nationally. After all, what a great way to showcase what we do best (building software) by supporting a cause we are passionate about (scouting).

So we finished a prototype, set up the hosting on our own equipment, and voila, we were ready to go. Since we issued the Press Release (available at: <http://decisiondesign.com/decisiondesign/Us/News20041201>). we have seen an amazing amount of interest from around the country. The software and hosting is totally free of charge to any scout unit in need.

 *Note:* All we ask for in return is that you recommend Decision Design if you know anyone in need of custom software. You can learn more about us by looking around our Website (<http://decisiondesign.com>).

Unit Leader Agreement

Unit Leaders have a unique and important responsibility in any scouting unit. The Unit Leader is the authorized person responsible for all activities, conduct, and operations of the Unit. This goes for the management and content of a scout Website as well.

Decision Design has agreed to support Scouting by offering free Website software, but this offer depends on a mutual agreement between the authorized Unit Leader and Decision Design. This agreement is simple, but we believe it is important to ensure that both the Leader and Decision Design are clear who is responsible for what.

Only authorized Unit Leaders are permitted to agree to these rules.

Unit Leaders at all times are responsible for the management and content of the site. Leaders are responsible for making sure their Unit is in compliance with the Terms of Use. Unit Leaders may delegate tasks to others for maintenance and editing, but the Leader is still responsible for whatever is loaded onto the site.

Decision Design is not responsible for any content placed on the site.

The Unit Leader must designate a single person in the Unit as Webmaster. The Webmaster will be the single point of contact with Decision Design

for support and information. Decision Design must have both the Webmaster's and the Unit Leader's updated contact information.

The Leaders Agreement form can be viewed and printed from the Decision Design Website (available at:

http://decisiondesign.com/decisiondesign/ScoutSite/Unit_Leader_Agreement.pdf). Please print the agreement, sign it, and return it to Decision Design via fax or mail.

Decision Design Corporation
2201 Waukegan Rd., Suite 140
Bannockburn, IL 60015
attn: Scout Coordinator
f 847.940.9222

Terms of Use

Having a Unit Website is a great way to keep your Unit parents informed and to get your scouts involved in Unit activities. But having and managing a public facing Website carries specific responsibilities. And one that focuses on our children carries an even larger responsibility.

As such, this Terms of Use page describes the basic rules of publishing information to the site and ensures that we all take responsibility for what is displayed. The best rule for publishing information on the Web is to use your common sense. But here are some obvious ones anyway:

- Do not publish anything that is indecent, pornographic, or inappropriate.
- Do not publish anything that is illegal, unethical, or rude.
- Do not publish anything embarrassing to anyone in your Pack or Troop or to the Scouting organizations in general.

- Do not publish any trademarked or copyrighted information unless you have specific permission to do so. Scouting related logos, graphics, and emblems are allowed provided they are not altered in any way.
- A scout's last name, address, phone number, or any other identifying information whatsoever shall never be published. If you must identify a child, use only their first name. Pictures of scouts are permitted, but they must not have identifying information associated with them.
- Names and other personal information about adults shall be published only with the approval of the adult.
- If anyone asks to have their information removed, respect their wishes and remove the information.
- You and everyone else in your Pack or Troop is responsible for ensuring that these basic rules are met. If you see content that breaks these basic rules, you need to notify your Unit Leader immediately to remove the offending content.

These simple rules will ensure that your Website is a safe and enjoyable place to be.

Getting Started

The first question a person using new software often asks is, “Where in the world do I start?” Hopefully, this guide will get you off on the right foot. It will explain the basics of editing your site’s content, provide specific instructions for each of the pages, and show how to change the way the site is presented.

Often the best way to learn how software works is to experiment. Especially for new users, we encourage you to “play around” with the various pages prior to letting your unit’s members know about your new Website.

Set up a few pages, add and delete content, and change the way your content looks to find a style that works best for you.

There are a few things you need to know and do to get started.

View the ScoutSite Software in Use - We have implemented several sites for actual scout units. Two of these are available for you to see.

- *www.brentwoodpack90.org*
- *www.foxlaketroop85.org*

Each of these sites was created using the software's Web-based editing tool that lets the Editor change pages, pictures, and text. Each Leader will be responsible for creating and editing their site with the editing tool. We think it is fairly intuitive to use, no programming skills needed, only basic knowledge on using a Web browser.

Right now it comes with a set of standard pages: Home, Calendar, Forms, Photos, Links and Contacts, all of which are editable.

Try out the software as an Editor - We have two demonstration sites setup, a kind of playground that you can try out how the software might work for you. These two sites will show you how they would look to a unit Webmaster as an editor. We have a Cub Scout version and a Boy Scout version you can look at:

- *[Sample Cub ScoutSite](#)*
- *[Sample Boy ScoutSite](#)*

These sites are the exact software, only set up as fictitious units. You are entering the software as an Editor, that is, you will see how it looks and operates as someone who will create and edit content. Go ahead and enter and change what you see there, it is there for you to try things out.

First you must login. You will see a small icon in the upper right corner of the page, click on the icon. You will then be prompted to enter a password. The password is “edit”, lower case, no quotes.

Once logged in you will see red borders around the content areas that can be changed. Click on the Change or Delete buttons to make changes. You will find Change and Delete buttons all around the site, at least for the areas you are allowed to change.

Note that the site is being shared by many people, maybe at the same time you are, so don't panic if something changes from time to time.

Review our Terms for Use policy --([“Terms of Use” on page 1-3](#))-- This is our way of explaining that the site displays information to the public, that it is for kids, and that we need to ensure that certain protections and guidelines are followed.

Follow the Unit Leader Agreement terms --([“Unit Leader Agreement” on page 1-2](#))-- The software is for bonafide scouting organizations. We require a site leader to agree with some basic terms: that the use of the site is for Leaders and people they assign, that the Leader is responsible for all content on the site, that Decision Design is not responsible for the content on the site, and that the Leader will follow the rules and guidelines.

Setting Up Your ScoutSite

The steps to setting up your unit's ScoutSite are:

1. Register a domain name.

To register for a domain name, go to GoDaddy.com, Register.com, or any other domain registrar you prefer.

2. Point the domain to the ScoutSite server's IP address.

Use the administrative tools provided by the domain registration service to point your domain name to the IP address of the ScoutSite server. Do this by adding the IP address for the ScoutSite server (63.150.87.10) to the A Record (address record) in the settings for your domain.

For example, if using the *http://www.register.com* registration service, you would login to your account, select the domain to modify, and (from the Advanced Technical Settings) select the Edit IP Address (A Record) link. On the Add IP Addresses (A Record) page, add the IP address for the ScoutSite server (63.150.87.10) in a points to field.



Warning: Do *not* change your provided DNS servers (for example, NS61.WORLDDNIC.COM). *ONLY* the A Records are to be affected!

3. Check that the domain name and IP address are correct.

Use a WhoAmI service to check that the domain name registration is active and to check that the IP address points to the ScoutSite server. Note that it may take 24 to 72 hours after domain registration for registration to become publicly available.

For example, if using the *http://whatismyipaddress.com* service, you would select the Hostname to IP utility, enter your domain name in the search field, and click on the Lookup IP Address button. The results should be that the Lookup Hostname is your domain name, and the Lookup IP Address should be the ScoutSite server (63.150.87.10).

4. Print, complete, and sign the Leaders Agreement form (available at: *http://decisiondesign.com/decisiondesign/ScoutSite/Unit Leader Agreement.pdf*), and return it to Decision Design via fax or mail.

Fax:
847.940.9222

Mail:

Decision Design Corporation
2201 Waukegan Rd., Suite 140
Bannockburn, IL 60015
attn: Scout Coordinator

5. (after faxing or allowing time for mail to arrive) Activate your site by contacting Decision Design by e-Mail at:

scoutsupport@decisiondesign.com

Please use the e-Mail subject “New ScoutSite activation request” and remember to include your contact info and domain name within the e-Mail.

After we receive your agreement, we will work with you to setup your site. It is quick. We'll need certain information from the Agreement (Unit, Leader Name, Address, e-Mail address, Webmaster Name, e-Mail, Unit, and Domain Name. We'll then give you some passwords, instructions, and a support contact here.

When the site is up and running, we will provide support via e-Mail. We will also send out information on the site, tips, changes, and anything else that might be helpful to you through postings to the DD Webmasters Yahoo! group:

- Visit http://groups.yahoo.com/group/DD_webmasters
- Subscribe to *DD_webmasters e-Mail list*
- Join *DD_webmasters group*

Operating the Site

It is a good idea to take some time to decide what you want your unit Website to do for your unit, how the Website can meet those goals, and identify who is going to provide the content (files and information) for

the Website. Take a hint from the model by which scout units are supposed to work. Just as the unit leader is not the only one doing communications tasks -- (for example, troop scribe, committee chair, committee secretary, round table recorder, etc. ... all have communications roles), the Webmaster does not have to be the only one generating content for your Website. Plan for (and sign up people to) provide meeting minutes, newsletters, forms, photos, and other items. All of these will be needed on a regular basis to operate an interesting and useful unit Website. For more information and suggestions, see [“What Should I Do Now?”](#) on page 2-12.

ScoutSite FAQs

For those of you looking for some information about the new ScoutSite software and how you might use it, we have created some answers to common questions:

- *How do I get access to some of your sample sites?*

We have several scouting units using the software. Look at these examples as a good guide for how a ScoutSite might look. Two are Cub Scout Packs and the other is a Boy Scout Troop.

- *www.brentwoodpack90.org*
- *www.foxlaketrop85.org*
- *www.brentwoodpack90.org*
- *What does it take to setup a new site?*

There are a number of steps in getting a new site up and running:

- An authorized unit leader must agree to our Leader Agreement and Rules of Use. This just ensures that authorized scout leaders, not Decision Design, are responsible for the unit's content put on the site. (See [“Unit Leader Agreement” on page 1-2.](#))
 - You need to register an internet domain name for your Website.
 - We need to setup our database with your unit's type (Boy Scout, Cub Scout, etc.) Unit number, your town/state, and a few other things we do on our end.
 - You need to add content to your site.
- *How do I register a domain name? Where do I get one?*

In order to use the site, you must have an address that points to our ScoutSite server. If you already have a registered domain name (e.g., pack310.org, columbiatroup32.com, etc.), it needs to point to the IP address of our server (63.150.87.10). If you don't yet have a domain name, you will need to get one. To register for a domain name, go to GoDaddy.com, Register.com, or any other domain registrar you prefer. Prices vary for registration, so shop around. Wherever you register, you will also need to have your domain name point to our ScoutSite IP address (63.150.87.10). Finally, you need to tell us your domain name. For more details on this process, see [“Setting Up Your ScoutSite” on page 1-6.](#) If you are not comfortable with this (too technical, a little intimidating, etc. ...), ask around your unit committee for assistance -- most units have at least one computer knowledgeable person who is happiest when dealing with bits and bytes.

- *Who can I contact if there are problems?*

You need to assign a single person in your unit who will be our point of contact. This person can then contact us via e-Mail at scoutsupport@decisiondesign.com. One way you might do this is to have someone designated by your unit leader as Webmaster or something like that. Then, that person is the liaison with us if problems arise.

- *Is there a developer's reference available with more technical detail than this user's guide?*

Sorry, none is planned. We do update this user's guide periodically with additional feature information. If you cannot find the information that you are seeking in the user's guide, we can assist you via e-Mail.

- *Can we host the software ourselves?*

Not at the moment. We have built the system to be hosted and managed on our own equipment, by our software people. We might consider giving the software to others to host, but we're not ready for that quite yet.

2 QUICK START

To get a quick start with the ScoutSite software, you should use the steps in this chapter to:

- Get acquainted with the software's View, Edit, and Admin modes
- Input your unit's info to the Website
- Add content to the Website

Using Edit Mode

When you first open your Website, you are in View Mode. To make changes to the content of your Website you must switch to Edit Mode. To switch to Edit Mode, click on the edit icon (paper/pencil icon). The edit icon is found to the right side of the tab bar ([Figure 2-1](#)).

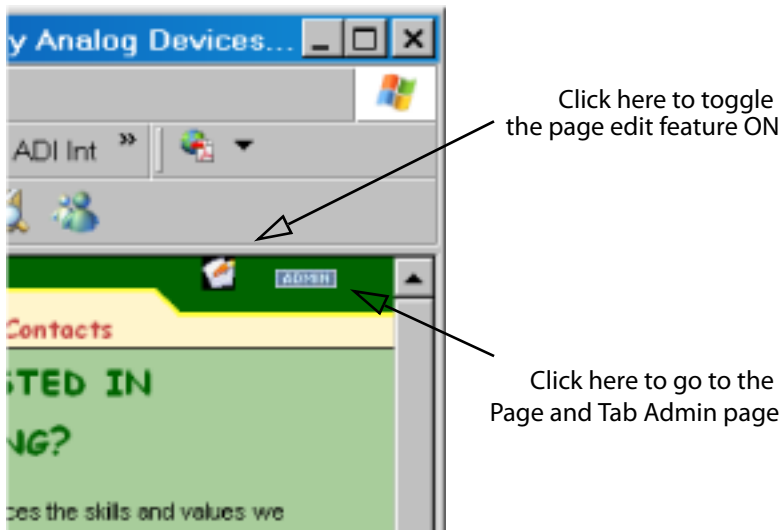


Figure 2-1. Editing Basics: Edit and Admin Mode Icons

Next to the edit icon is the admin icon (admin box icon). Clicking on this icon puts you in Admin mode, which lets you administer unit information and page layout features.

After clicking on the mode icon, type your edit/admin password into the box on the password page ([Figure 2-2](#)).

Please log in.

Password

Enter the password you were given by the administrator

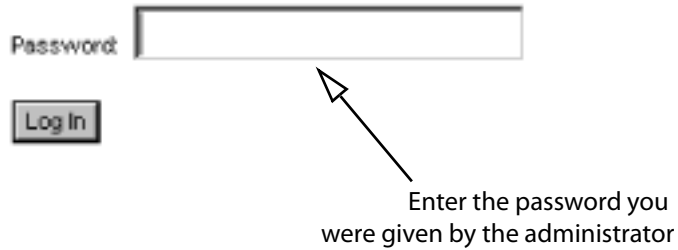


Figure 2-2. Editing Basics: Login

After your password is validated, you will be in Edit Mode. You can tell you are in Edit Mode because the content of your pages will be outlined with a red dotted-line box and the editing commands (Add New, change, etc.) will be visible ([Figure 2-3](#)).

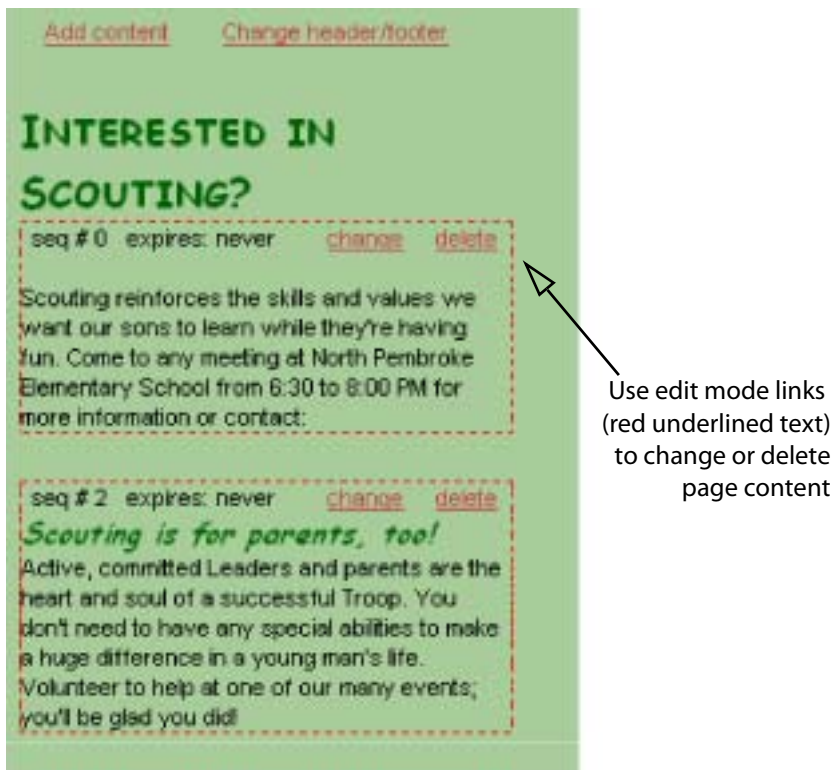


Figure 2-3. Editing Basics: Edit Mode

To switch back to View Mode while you are editing, click on the edit icon.

Edit and Admin Icon Display

The default setting for the ScoutSite software is to always show the edit and admin icons. It is possible to change that setting, such that the edit and admin icons are *not* always visible. One of the features in your unit information (accessible through Admin mode) is the ability to configure

to *toggle* of the display of the edit and admin icons. When these icons are set to toggle, the icon is only shown when you request it.

To make the edit icon visible when it is toggled off, Alt-Click or Shift-Click on your unit logo. Your unit logo is the picture in the upper left corner of the home page.

To hide the edit icon when it is toggled on, Alt-Click or Shift-Click on your unit logo.



Note: Firefox/Mozilla/NetScape users should not choose “Toggle”. The feature used to toggle the edit icon is not supported by those browsers.

Edit and Admin Password

You were provided with your edit password when Decision Design set up your Website. You may change your edit password; instructions for doing so are given in the Editing Site Information section.

You will only be prompted to enter your edit password once per session. If you switch to Edit Mode, go back to View Mode, then switch to Edit Mode again you won't be prompted for your edit password a second time. Don't worry; password security is still protecting your Website, the software has remembered that you already signed-in.

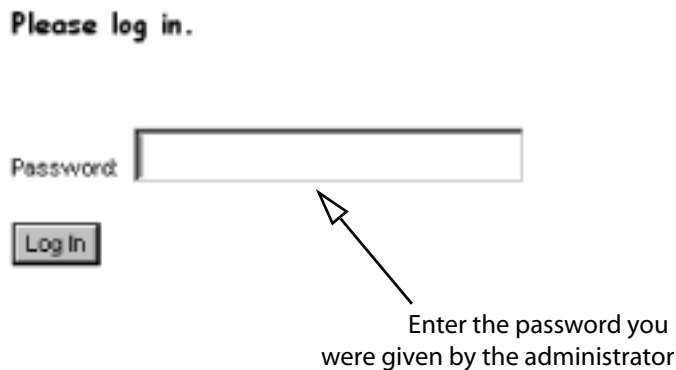
The Edit and Admin mode password (and the photo upload password and the photo viewing password) are configurable in your unit information (accessibly through Admin mode).

Using Admin Mode

When you first open your Website, you are in View mode. To administer unit information and page layout features, you must switch to Admin mode. To switch to Admin mode, click on the admin icon (admin box

icon). The icon is found to the right of the tab bar (Figure 2-1). Next to the admin icon is the edit icon (paper/pencil icon). Clicking on this icon puts you in Edit mode, which lets you change Website content.

After clicking on the mode icon, type your edit/admin password into the box on the password page (Figure 2-4).





The image shows a login interface. At the top, it says "Please log in." Below this is a label "Password:" followed by a rectangular text input field. To the left of the input field is a "Log In" button. An arrow points from the text "Enter the password you were given by the administrator" to the input field.

Figure 2-4. Admin Basics: Login

After your password is validated, you will be in Admin Mode. You can tell you are in Admin mode because the admin dialog appears. Using this dialog (Figure 2-5), you can change unit information and modify Web page layout.

		Page Name	Description	Group	Order	Display
Edit		Home	Return to main page	1	0	Yes
Edit	Delete	Bottle Bin	Bottle Bin assignments	1	10	Yes
Edit		Calendar	Unit activities and events	1	20	Yes
Edit		Training	Training activities and events	1	20	Yes
Edit		Newsletters	View Newsletters	1	30	Yes
Edit		Forms	Forms, policies, documents, etc	1	40	Yes
Edit		Photos	View Photos	1	50	Yes
Edit		Links	Other useful web sites	1	60	Yes
Edit		Contacts	View Contact List	1	70	Yes
Edit	Delete	Joining	Information about joining	2	10	Yes
Edit	Delete	Parent Info	Information for parents	2	20	No
Edit	Delete	Advancement	Information about advancement	2	30	No

 Delete (available for custom pages) page definition

 Edit page layout features

Set "Display" to "No" to disable a page without deleting the page definition 

Figure 2-5. Admin Basics: Admin Dialog

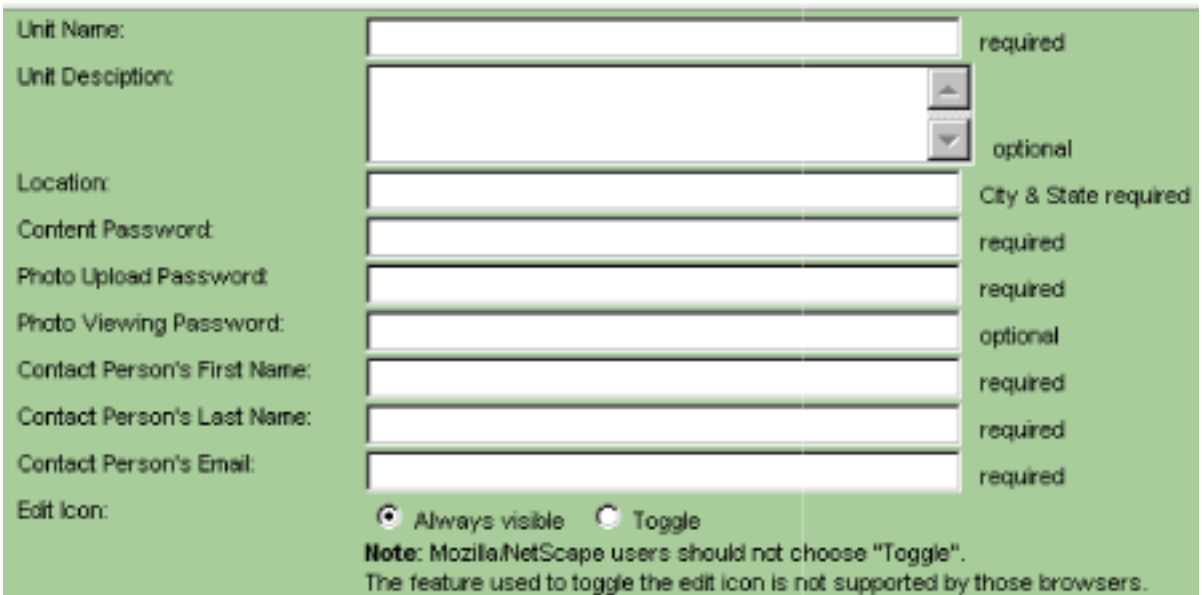
Other links in the Admin dialog (not shown in [Figure 2-5](#)):

- Home Return to Home page
- Create New Create a new Tab/Page Type
- Edit Unit Info Change your Unit information
- Your Files Rename/Delete files uploaded to your site

The group and order settings work as follows:

- Set “Group” to “1” for page tab items (e.g., Home)
- Set “Group” to “2” for icon bar items (e.g., Admin)
- Use “Order” to control right-to-left display order within group

One of the options from the admin dialog is `Edit Unit Info` (Figure 2-6). This dialog lets you control password selections, unit name, and certain processing options.



Unit Name:	<input type="text"/>	required
Unit Description:	<input type="text"/>	optional
Location:	<input type="text"/>	City & State required
Content Password:	<input type="password"/>	required
Photo Upload Password:	<input type="password"/>	required
Photo Viewing Password:	<input type="password"/>	optional
Contact Person's First Name:	<input type="text"/>	required
Contact Person's Last Name:	<input type="text"/>	required
Contact Person's Email:	<input type="text"/>	required

Edit icon: Always visible Toggle

Note: Mozilla/NetScape users should not choose "Toggle".
The feature used to toggle the edit icon is not supported by those browsers.

Figure 2-6. Admin Basics: Unit Info Dialog

To switch back to View Mode while you are administering, click on the Home page link.

Modifying Website Pages (Edit Mode)

Typical general-purpose operations in Edit mode (accessed through the edit icon) are:

- Adding new content
- Changing existing content
- Saving changes to content or deleting content

For information on more specific editing operations, see either [“ScoutSite Editor -- Basic” on page 3-1](#) or [“ScoutSite Editor -- Advanced” on page 4-1](#).

Adding New Content

At the top of each page (except for the Photos page) there is a link to add a new entry to the page. The link will say “Add New *itemtype*” where *itemtype* refers to the type of page you are editing. For example, to add a new Calendar entry, click the “Add new Event” link at the top of the Calendar page ([Figure 2-7](#)).

Calendar of Events

Filter By:	Dates <input type="text" value="All upcoming"/>	Text <input type="text"/>
Add new Event		Print
		Download as Excel
	What's Happening	When
change	SPL Council Meeting, Troop Committee Meeting	Jan. 3, 2008 : 6:00 - 8:30 PM SPL mtg: 6:00 PM Com. mtg: 7:00 PM
change	Christmas Tree Pickup	Jan. 5, 2008 : 8:30 AM

Figure 2-7. Editing Basics: Adding a new record

Changing Existing Content

Next to each item (except on the Photos page and on user defined pages) will be a link to change the content of the item. The link will say “change” and will appear either to the left or right of the item. Clicking the “change” link takes you to a new window where you can change the content of the item.

Add new Event		Print
	Training Activity	When
change	Tri Council Scouter University - Commissioner / District Operations Training Mohegan Council, Worcester, MA	Mar. 8, 2008 : (see :
change	National Youth Leader Training - at Camp Squanto - This training is required for all scouts serving their troop as SPL or ASPL. {Date is tentative, pending publication of Camp Squanto schedule.}	Jun. 29 - Jul. 5, 200

Click here to edit or delete this item

Figure 2-8. Editing Basics: Changing content

Saving Changes to Content or Deleting Content

To delete an item, first open the edit page for the item by clicking the “change” link (see above). At the top of the edit page there is a link to delete the item. Click the “Delete” link and you will see a popup warning you that the item is about to be permanently deleted. Click the “OK” button and the content will be deleted. Click the “Cancel” button to return to the edit page without deleting the content.



Use the change content dialog to save content changes or to delete content

Figure 2-9. Editing Basics: Deleting content

What Should I Do Now?

Now that you feel comfortable with using View, Edit, and Admin modes to modify content, page layout and unit information, you have some choices regarding your next steps.

One good choice would be to learn more about the specialized page types (calendar, photos, home, etc. ...). To become more familiar with these, you should see the descriptions in [“ScoutSite Editor -- Basic” on page 3-1](#).

Another possibility would be to organize the content that you want to add to your site, develop a plan for adding it to your site, and work out a process for maintaining your site.

The section on advanced techniques ([“ScoutSite Editor -- Advanced” on page 4-1](#)) provides information about how to provide “value added” content to your Website. If you are already comfortable with HTML (or would like to try working with just a little bit of it), you should see that section.

3 SCOUTSITE EDITOR -- BASIC

The ScoutSite Edit and Admin modes let you add content to your Website and administer page layout features. If you are not already familiar with using the Edit and Admin modes, see the [“Quick Start” on page 2-1](#) for more information about these modes.

The ScoutSite editor basic information covered in this chapter includes:

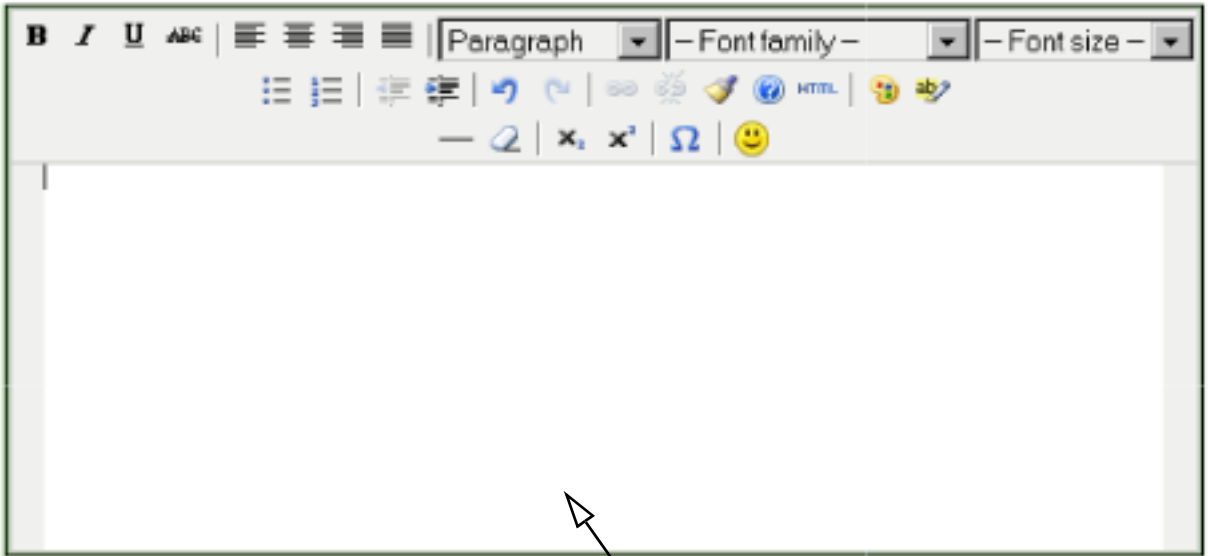
- Using the “Easy Formatting” editor to format page content
- Working with the unique features of various page types (calendar, photos, etc. ...)
- Examining operation of a few example custom pages (newsletters, forms, etc. ...)

Easy Formatting Editor

To edit content, ScoutSite provides the Easy Formatting Editor. This tool lets you edit HTML for the pages using icon selections for formats and dialog entries for other items. The editor dialog (see [Figure 3-1](#)) provides the following fields:

Header Text	Text at top of content paragraph(s) (optional)
Content Text	The main body paragraph(s) of your content (optional)

Content Image	Select an image An image to display with your text (optional)
Content URL	A link related to your content (optional)
Content URL text	The text to show with the URL (optional)
Display-Until Date	Display content until this date (optional; use MM/DD/YYYY format)
Display Sequence	Display 1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc. in list



In the “Easy Formatting” editor,
you can edit and format content using an icon interface.
Enter your information to add or edit content here.

Figure 3-1. Editing Basics: Easy Formatting Editor

After completing your edits, click the `Save` link to save your data. To exit without saving changes, click the `Close` link.



Note: The HTML button opens a separate editor for modify the content text HTML codes. For more information on this editor, see [“ScoutSite Editor -- Advanced” on page 4-1.](#)

Home Page Editing

Unlike the other pages, editing on the Home page provides access to three columns of content and permits editing the header/footer for the third column. To add new content to the Home page, there is a link at the top of each column to add an item to that column. The links for each column and the header/footer are the “Add left-side content” link, the “Add center content” link, the “Add content” link, and the “Add change header/footer” link at the top of the center column.

Adding, changing, or deleting content to the left-side column can only be done when you are viewing the Home page, even though the left-side column is shown on all pages.

Calendar and Training Pages

The calendar and training Web pages let you publish your unit’s schedule information.

Because your technique for working with these pages can greatly influence both how much time you spend on this page and how useful the page content is to your unit, you may find the following points helpful.

Enter all available event dates that are supplied by your council and district as soon as they become available. Often, councils provide a mid-scouting-year (around December) calendar update, so you should

always be able to keep your calendar populated one year in advance of the current date.

Use all of the fields when populating an event on the calendar. The event Type field is particularly useful. Note that Events of type “Training” appear on both the calendar and training page, so you can enter data for these on either page. Populating all of the fields for events lets your site’s visitors use the calendar’s filter feature to view selections from the calendar.

As you are entering a series of events of the same type, the Save and Repeat feature of the calendar event editor can save a lot of time. Instead of trying to enter all events for the year chronologically, it is much easier to enter all “unit meeting” type events, then all “round table” type events, then all “council event” type events, and so on.

Calendar of Events


Filter By:	Dates <input type="text" value="All upcoming"/>	Text <input type="text"/>	Apply Re Advanced
Add new Event		Print	Download as Excel or Word
	What's Happening	When	
change	Christmas Tree Pickup	Jan. 5, 2008 : 8:30 AM	Pe
change	Troop Meeting	Jan. 8, 2008 : 6:30 - 8:00 PM	N 7:

Click here to add a new event to the list.

Click here to change an existing event.

Figure 3-2. Special Edits: Calendar page

It is much easier to maintain the calendar the second and proceeding years, because (for the most part) you can just edit entries from the previous year (update meeting dates, repeated event dates, etc. ...).

 *Note:* for more information about making calendar entries easier to read (advanced formatting) and more useful (adding links), see [“ScoutSite Editor -- Advanced” on page 4-1](#) and [“Adding Links within Calendar” on page 4-3](#).

Newsletters and Forms Pages

The newsletter and forms pages let you publish your unit’s need-to-know information.

Using these two pages, you can provide support documents for events on your calendar. For instance, a trip event on the calendar should probably have a corresponding permission form published on the forms page. The series of events on the calendar for a month should probably have detailed descriptions in a monthly newsletter that is published on the newsletter page.

Note: It is useful to control the posting order such that the newest items are always at the top of the list. Also, standardizing the document names (so they start with their posting date) lets site visitors quickly know that the content is “fresh”.



Figure 3-3. Special Edits: Newsletter page

Links and Contacts Pages

The links and contacts pages let you direct site visitors (scouts, parents, and leaders) to useful (and youth friendly!) information on the Web or let you provide contact information for adults in your unit.

The figure (Figure 3-4) shows some suggested links. There are many others to consider on the *Official BSA Links* page:

<http://usscouts.org/netresources/officialbsa.asp>

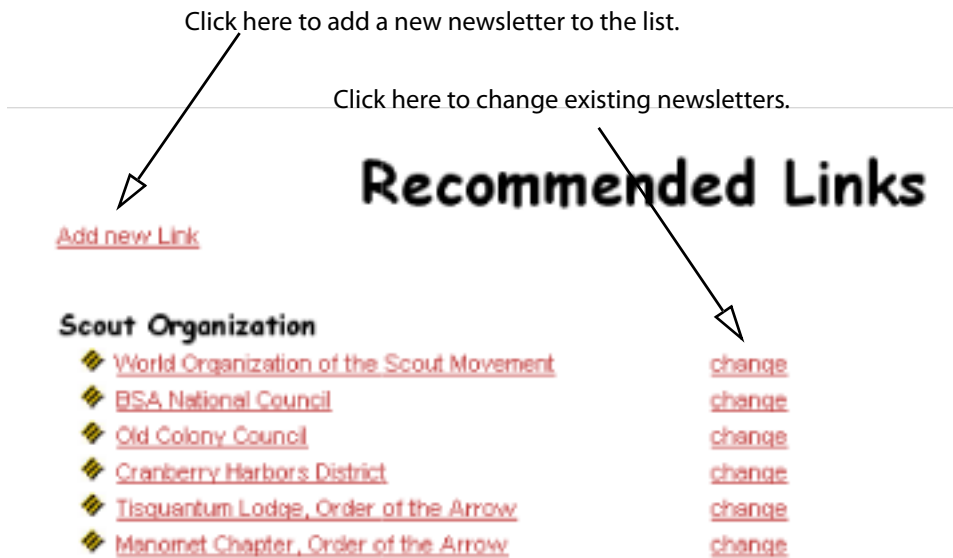


Figure 3-4. Special Edits: Links page

- i** *Note:* Regarding links, these frequently change. Be sure to routinely (at least once a year) check all the links on your Website to make sure that they still work.
- i** *Note:* Regarding contacts, providing e-Mail contact information on your leaders can open them up to getting a lot of spam. For information about providing secure e-Mail, see [“Providing Secure e-Mail for Contacts” on page 4-4.](#)

Photos Page

The photos page may be one of the most popular locations on your site. Kids generally love to see pictures of themselves and their friends from you

unit's activities. Also, pictures of your unit doing fun things can be a great recruiting tool.



Note: Using the ScoutSite photo page may provide everything that your unit needs for photo publishing. If, however, you want to help site visitors use a third party site (for example, www.clark-color.com) to post more pictures, order prints, provide photo support more geared to large uploads from digital cameras, see “[Improving Photo Sharing](#)” on page 4-5.

Youth Protection

Always keep online safety in mind, especially when posting photos of children. The Terms of Use page on the Decision Design Website --

<http://www.decisiondesign.com/scoutsite/TermsOfUse>

-- states some rules about posting content and pictures. These rules must be followed for everyone's protection:

- Do not publish anything that is indecent, pornographic, or inappropriate.
- Do not publish anything that is illegal, unethical, or rude.
- Do not publish anything embarrassing to anyone in your Pack or Troop or to the Scouting organizations in general.
- Do not publish any trademarked or copyrighted information unless you have specific permission to do so. Scouting related logos, graphics, and emblems are allowed provided they are not altered in any way.

- A scout's last name, address, phone number, or any other identifying information whatsoever *shall never be published*. If you must identify a child, use only their first name. Pictures of scouts are permitted, but they must not have identifying information associated with them.
- Names and other personal information about adults shall be published only with the approval of the adult.
- If anyone asks to have their information removed, respect their wishes and remove the information.

You and everyone else in your Pack or Troop is responsible for ensuring that these basic rules are met. If you see content that breaks these basic rules, you need to notify your Unit Leader immediately to remove the offending content.

Limitations

At present, Decision Design does not plan to place any limits on the number of pictures/files you can upload to your site, nor on the total size of all files on your site. We do reserve the right to implement limits at a later date.

Uploaded photos are intended for online viewing, not as a public storage location for high-resolution images. As part of the upload process we reduce the resolution of image files to be no larger than 800x600 pixels. Also, only the more common image and video file formats are supported. Permitted file formats can be identified by the following file suffixes: .jpg/.jpeg, .gif, .bmp, .mov, or .mpg/.mpeg.

Who Can Upload Pictures

The task of uploading pictures to the Photos page can be delegated to other members of your unit. There is a separate password that can be used only to upload pictures. This picture upload password was supplied when

your unit's site was set up and can be modified via the [Editing Unit Information](#) page (see [“Admin Basics: Admin Dialog”](#) on page 2-7).

Uploading Pictures Procedure

To upload new pictures to your Website, navigate to the Photos page by clicking on the Photos tab (note: the tab text may be changed by the Webmaster; see the Editing Standard Pages section). If you already have uploaded pictures to your site, the folders holding them will be displayed as shown in the example. Otherwise, only a single folder will be shown. In either case, the procedure to upload new pictures is as follows.

1. Click on the [Upload New Pictures](#) link. (Figure 3-5)
2. Create a new folder or select an existing folder to contain the uploaded pictures. Click on either the [Create Folder](#) or [Select Folder](#) link. (Figure 3-6)



Figure 3-5. Uploading Pictures: Upload New Pictures link

Note: Uploading pictures can be a slow process, especially if you have a dial-up connection or if your pictures are large. You may wish to reduce the size of your pictures before uploading them.

After selecting a folder (or creating/selecting one), the selected folder name appears.

Step 1. Select or create a folder to hold your pictures. [Select Folder](#) [Create Folder](#)

Upload pictures to folder: 2008-02-16_Valley_Forge_camping_trip

Step 2. Select the pictures you wish to upload. **Add a caption**

<input type="text"/>	<input type="button" value="Browse..."/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="button" value="Browse..."/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="button" value="Browse..."/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="button" value="Browse..."/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="button" value="Browse..."/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="button" value="Browse..."/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="button" value="Browse..."/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="button" value="Browse..."/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="button" value="Browse..."/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="button" value="Browse..."/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="button" value="Browse..."/>	<input type="text"/>

Step 3. Click the button to upload your pictures.

Figure 3-6. Uploading Pictures: Photo Upload Page

Creating a new folder:

1. Enter a name for the new folder (required).
2. Enter a numeric sequence number for the new folder (optional). If you leave the sequence field blank, your folders will be displayed in alphabetic order.
3. Choose an existing folder that your new folder will be part of by clicking on an existing folder from the folders shown.
4. Click on the `Save` link.

You may create as many new folders as you wish by repeating these steps for each new folder. Click the `Return` link when you have finished creating new folders.

Selecting an existing folder:

1. Click on the folder name you wish to place your pictures into.
2. Select the pictures you wish to upload from your computer and upload them to the Website. Up to 10 pictures may be uploaded at a time.
3. Click on the `Browse` button and browse to the picture's location, or type the picture's location into the text box.
4. Type a caption to be displayed below the picture in the "Add a caption ..." box (optional).
5. Click on the `Upload` button.

Changing Picture Information

You can change the captions and display sequence of pictures after they have been uploaded. This can be useful in cases where the person uploading the pictures does not add a caption at the time the picture is uploaded

or if several people upload pictures and they are being displayed out of sequence.

To change picture information:

- Display the pictures by clicking on the folder name on the Photos page.
- Click on the `Change Picture Info` link.

Thumbnail images of the pictures in the folder are displayed, along with text boxes where you can enter captions or sequence numbers for the picture. Also, you can delete the picture from the folder.

When you are done changing captions / sequence numbers, click the `Save` link.

Modifying Folders

As Webmaster, you can change your Photos folder structure to display the photos in an organized fashion. You can add or delete folders, rename folders, change a folder's display number, and move folders around within the display hierarchy.

The key to changing folders with a minimum of confusion is to remember that you first have to identify which folder you are working with (the “target” folder) and then perform an action to that folder. For example, to rename an existing folder you would first pick a folder, then enter a new name for the folder, and then click the rename button.

To begin modifying folders, click on the `Modify Folders` link on the Photos page (Figure 3-7). If you are not in edit mode, you will be prompted to enter your edit password. You then see the Photo Administration page.

From this page you can add folders, change a folder's parent or display sequence, rename the folder, or delete the entire folder and all the pictures in it.

Step 1. Select or create a folder. [Select Folder](#) [Create Folder](#)

Step 2. Modify folder - None selected -

		Delete this folder:	Delete Folder
Rename this folder:	<input type="text"/>		Rename Folder
		Set folder display sequence:	<input type="text"/> Set Sequence
		Change folder's parent (location in hierarchy):	Move Folder

Click on a folder name to select the new parent folder of this folder.

- Boy Scout Troop 85 Pictures
 - Campouts
 - Eagle Projects
 - Events

Figure 3-7. Photo Administration: Main page

Selecting the “Target” folder

The first step in modifying a folder is to select a folder to be modified. This is known as the target folder. To select the target folder:

1. Click on the `Select Folder` link (Figure 3-8).
2. Expand or collapse the folder tree display by clicking on the plus (+) or minus (-) icons until the desired folder is visible (Figure 3-9).
3. Click on the folder name.

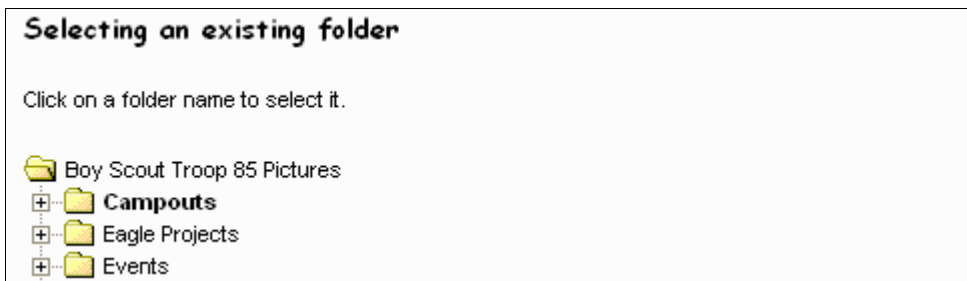


Figure 3-8. Photo Administration: Selecting a Target Folder

When a folder has been selected as the target folder, it will appear as shown below:

Step 2. `Modify folder` 2004-05 Cantigny

Deleting a Folder



WARNING: When you delete a folder, you also delete ALL pictures contained in that folder! Deleted pictures *cannot* be recovered!

To delete a folder and all pictures in the folder:

1. Select a target folder.
2. Click on the `Delete Folder` button.
3. A pop-up window is displayed to remind you that deleting the folder will delete all the pictures in the folder. Click `OK` to delete the folder and all pictures it contains; click `Cancel` to close the pop-up without deleting the folder.

Renaming a Folder

To change the name of an existing folder:

1. Select a target folder.
2. Enter the new name for the folder in the “Rename this folder” box.
3. Click on the `Rename Folder` button.

Setting a Folder’s Sequence Number

To change the display order of an existing folder:

1. Select a target folder.
2. Enter the display sequence number for the folder in the “Set folder display sequence” box.
3. Click on the `Set Sequence` button.

Folders with the same display sequence number are displayed in alphabetical order by folder name. Folders with no display sequence number are displayed before folders that do have a sequence number.

Create a New Folder

In addition to creating new folders as part of the photo upload procedure you can create new picture folders from the photo administration page. This can be useful when organizing your pictures, by putting all pictures from camp-outs under a “Campouts” folder, for example. To create a new folder:

1. Click on the `Create Folder` link (Figure 3-7).
2. Enter information about your new folder:
3. Enter a name for the new folder (required).
4. Enter a numeric sequence number for the new folder (optional).
5. Choose an existing folder that your new folder will be part of.
6. Expand or collapse the folder tree display by clicking on the plus (+) or minus (-) icons until the desired folder is visible (Figure 3-8).
7. Click on the folder name.
8. Click on the `Save` link.

You may create as many new folders as you wish by repeating steps 2 and 3 for each new folder. Click the `Return` link when you have finished creating new folders. If you click on a folder name before clicking the `Return` link, that folder will become the target folder.

Organizing the Folders

You can organize your pictures by setting up a hierarchy of folders. You may wish to set up a folder for all your camp-out pictures, for example, with sub-folders for pictures from each individual camp-out. Another common technique is to group events by year. Through a combination of

new folders, setting the folder display sequences, and the Move Folder feature you should be able to organize your pictures any way you wish.

To move an existing folder to a new location in the hierarchy:

1. Select a target folder.
2. Select the target folder's new parent folder (the folder that the target folder will be a sub-folder of) (Figure 3-9).
3. Click on the `Move Folder` button.

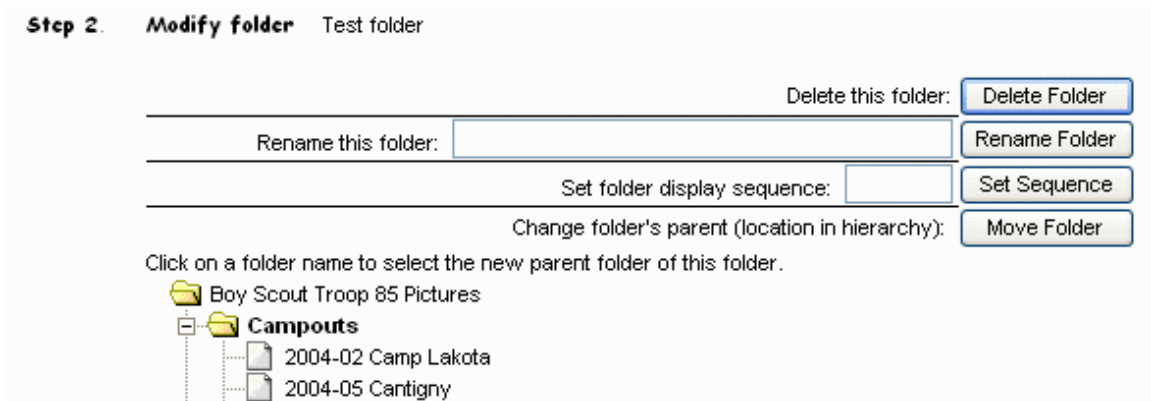


Figure 3-9. Photo Administration: Moving a Folder

Custom Pages Editing

ScoutSite lets you define custom pages to support the unique needs of your unit.

i *Note:* Because the Joining, Parent Info, and Advancement pages are special applications of the custom page template, these pages are also covered in this section.

To define a custom page, change to Admin mode and select the [Create New](#) link from the page administration page.

For user-defined pages, the links to add new content and to change existing content are both at the top of the page. When a custom page has content entries (sub pages), the [Change](#) link opens the edit page for the content being displayed ([Figure 3-10](#)).

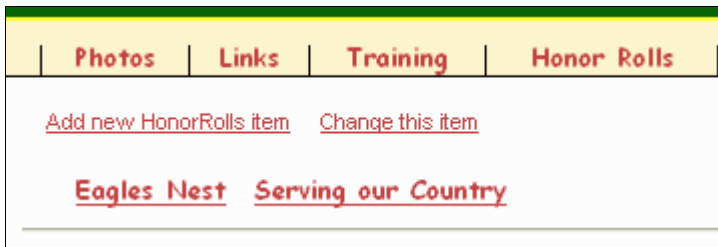


Figure 3-10. Special Edits: Custom pages

Some important controls when editing custom page content include:

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| Tab position | Select Left side for group 1 (home page group) or Right side for group 2 (edit icon group) |
| Display sequence | Selects order within group |
| Show tab | Select Yes to show or No to hide the page |

Joining Page

The joining page lets you provide information to prospective scouts and serves as support for your recruiting efforts. It is important to remember that the content of this page is as much for parents as for potential scouts. The text of a typical Joining page (which includes the scout oath, scout law, scouting's mission statement, and scouting's vision statement) follows.

Interested in Scouting?

The MISSION of the Boy Scouts of America is to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Law.

Scout Oath

On my honor I will do my best
To do my duty to God and my country
and to obey the Scout Law;
To help other people at all times;
To keep myself physically strong,
mentally awake, and morally straight.


Scout Law


A Scout is:
Trustworthy, Loyal, Helpful,
Friendly, Courteous, Kind,
Obedient, Cheerful, Thrifty,
Brave, Clean, Reverent.

Its VISION? The Boy Scouts of America is the nation's foremost youth program of character development and values-based leadership training. In the future, Scouting will continue to:

- Offer young people responsible fun and adventure;
- Instill in young people lifetime values and develop in them ethical character as expressed in the Scout Oath and Law;
- Train young people in citizenship, service, and leadership;
- Serve America's communities and families with its quality, values-based program.

Get More Information!

For more information about joining Troop XXXX, e-Mail our scoutmaster or come to any meeting at XXXX-location-XXXX. Meeting and event dates are listed on the Troop XXXX calendar. Interested in finding another scout unit (Cubscout Pack Boy Scout Troop, or Venture Crew)? Go to the *BSA National Council Website* and follow the JOIN SCOUTING link. 

 *Note:* This example uses some advanced HTML editing techniques. You do not have to get this fancy, but if you want to add the HTML items shown (a table for scout oath and law, a link to the national Website, etc.), see [“ScoutSite Editor -- Advanced” on page 4-1](#) for help.

Parent Info Page

The Parent Info page lets you provide information to parents of prospective and active scouts and serves as support for your adult leader recruiting efforts. It is important to remember that the content of this page is as much for scouts as parents (the scouts will read it and they need to see a consistent message). The text of a typical Parent Info page (which includes the call for volunteer leaders and merit badge counselors, leader training, and troop policy book link) follows.

Information for Parents!

At the founding of the scouting movement in 1910, Lord Baden-Powell said,

“Scouting is a game for boys, run by boys, and overseen by adults.”

This insight still holds true today as the scouting movement makes great strides toward the century mark.

You son needs you, your presence at troop events, your example as a troop leader, your demonstration that the mission and vision of scouting have meaning for you.


This commitment does not have to be overwhelming. It just takes an hour a week to make a difference.

Please talk TODAY with our scoutmaster or troop committee chair about being a merit badge counselor, troop committee member, assistant scoutmaster, or participating another way in your son's scouting life.

Want to learn more about how scouting works and what you can do to help? See the <http://www.scoutparents.org/> Website.

For information about Troop 105's specific practices to apply BSA general guidelines, see the troop policy book.




 *Note:* This example uses some advanced HTML editing techniques. You do not have to get this fancy, but if you want to add the HTML items shown (links to the national Website, etc.), see [“ScoutSite Editor -- Advanced” on page 4-1](#) for help.

Advancement Page

The advancement page lets you publish an online troop advancement matrix (for example, generated by TroopMaster) and any other advancement information that would be helpful to site visitors.

There are pros and cons to using an advancement page. The strongest pro is that publishing this information makes it much easier to run your unit’s program and lets scouts see where they stand with advancement very easily.

 *Note:* To comply with youth protection guidelines, make sure that your advancement chair (or whoever is generating reports from TroopMaster) enables the Convert Scout/Adult last names to initial in the TroopMaster File>>Preferences>>Hidden Fields tab. With this setting enabled, you can easily generate the advancement matrix report from TroopMaster (Reports>>Awards/Advancement>>Advancement Status) in a form that protects the identities of your scouts online.

4 SCOUTSITE EDITOR -- ADVANCED

The ScoutSite Edit and Admin modes let you add content to your Website and administer page layout features. If you are not already familiar with using the Edit and Admin modes, see the [“Quick Start” on page 2-1](#) for more information about these modes.

The ScoutSite editor basic information covered in this chapter includes:

- Using the “Easy Formatting” editor to format page content
- Working with the unique features of various page types (calendar, photos, etc. ...)
- Examining the operation of a few example custom pages (newsletters, forms, etc. ...)

HTML Source Editor

To edit content HTML tagging, ScoutSite provides the HTML Source Editor. This tool lets you edit HTML tagging for the pages.

To access the HTML Source Editor for a page, click on the HTML button within the Easy Formatting Editor after selecting Change item for the

page (Figure 4-1). The HTML source editor lets you edit and format content using HTML tags.

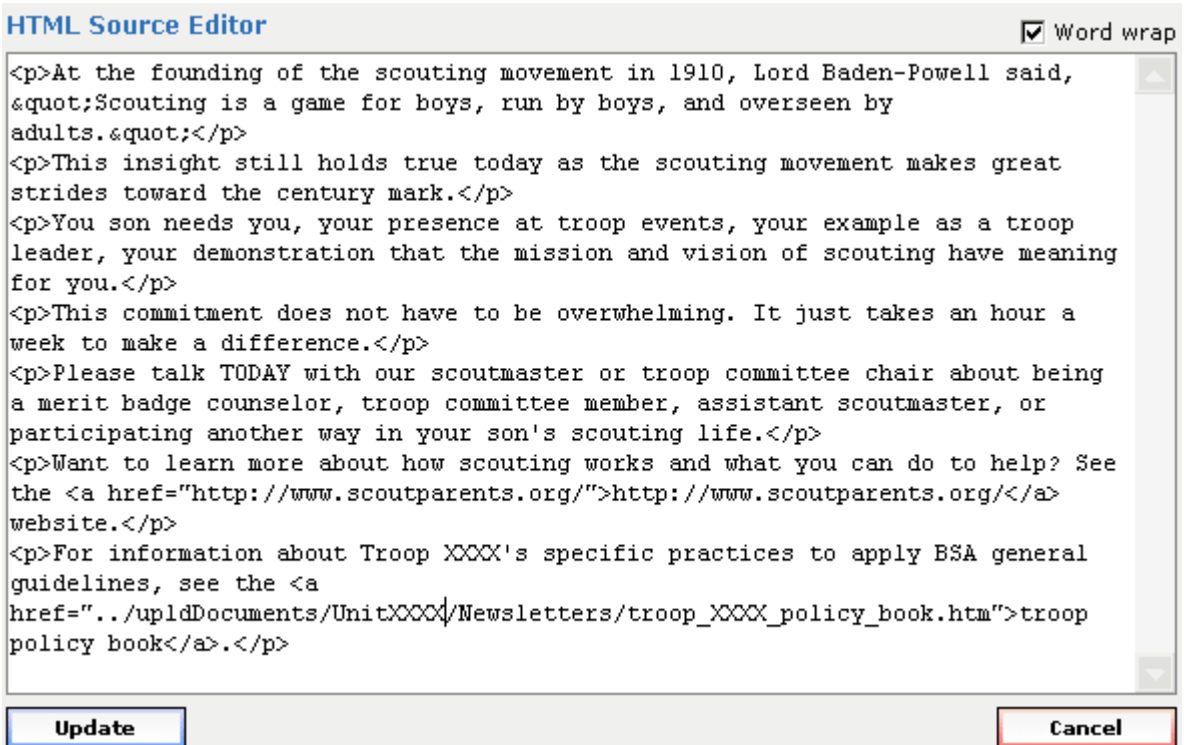



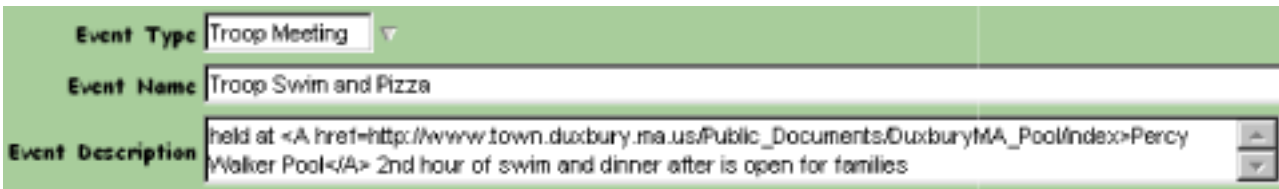
Figure 4-1. Editing Advanced: HTML Source Editor

After completing your edits, click the `Update` link to save your data and return to the Easy Formatting Editor. To exit (get back to the Easy Formatting Editor) without saving changes, click the `Cancel` link.

 *Note:* You do not have to use the HTML button to edit content with HTML codes. For information on using the icon-driven, user-friendly editor, see “[Easy Formatting Editor](#)” on page 3-1.

Adding Links within Calendar

Links to sites with more information are one of the handiest things that you can add to event descriptions on your unit’s calendar. These links can also save you from the need to post information duplicated from another Website. These could include, for example, directions to a camping location (Figure 4-2). Use `<A HREF>` tagging in the event description field to add the URL for a Website that is related to the event.



The image shows a form with three fields: 'Event Type' with a dropdown menu set to 'Troop Meeting', 'Event Name' with the text 'Troop Swim and Pizza', and 'Event Description' with the text 'held at Percy Walker Pool 2nd hour of swim and dinner after is open for families'. The description field shows the raw HTML code for the link.

Figure 4-2. Editing Advanced: HTML Links in Event Descriptions

i *Note:* You can use a variety of simple HTML tags in the event description field. The ones that you may find most useful are bold (` `), italic (`<i> </i>`), and line break (`
 </br>`).

Improving Content Formatting

One content formatting challenge is that long event descriptions (see “Adding Links within Calendar” on page 4-3) may start to make your calendar a little harder to print and read. Using some simple HTML tags to control line breaks, improve readability, and highlight key information are helpful. Figure 4-3 shows how an unformatted entry appears in the table (makes the description column too wide, hard to find important info, no

links). After adding the HTML tagging (below), you can see in [Figure 4-4](#) that the calendar entry is a bit more readable and useful.

```
<br>- at <A href=http://www.campsquanto.net>Camp Squanto</A> <br>
- This training is required for all scouts <br>
serving their
troop as SPL or ASPL. <br>
<B>{Date is tentative, pending <br>
publication of Camp Squanto schedule.}</B>
```

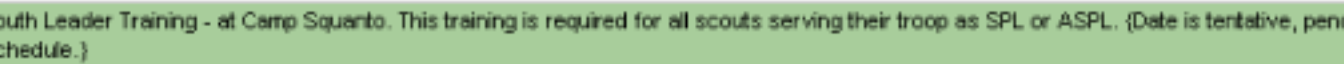


Figure 4-3. Editing Advanced: Calendar Event Description WITHOUT Formatting (description column gets too wide)

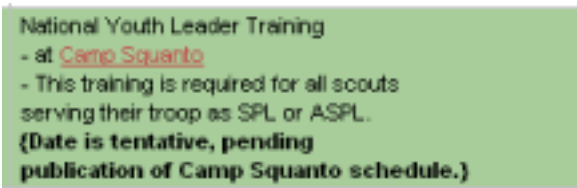


Figure 4-4. Editing Advanced: Calendar Event Description WITH HTML Formatting (description column width is controllable)

Providing Secure e-Mail for Contacts

Part of terms of use for ScoutSite is protecting the identity of the youth in your unit, but what about protecting the identities of the adult? It is important to protect the identities (names, e-Mail addresses, contact information, etc. ...) of your unit's leaders. By protecting these, you are

protecting the adults from spam, scams, and many other scourges of the hacker culture.

The first step is to limit the number of contacts that you put on your Website. Do you really need to have contact information for more than the unit leader and committee chair? (After all, everyone should be listed on the unit roster, which should be distributed to all unit members -- not placed on the Website.)

The next step is to find ways to let Website visitors contact these few leaders in a way that protects the leaders contact information. One way to do this is to use a third party e-Mail form service to route the e-Mail through a separate server. This technique gets the e-Mail from the visitor to the leader without displaying the leader's e-Mail in the visitor's e-Mail application. There are a number of these services available, a free one is <http://www.freedback.com>.

Improving Photo Sharing

From reading the photo page section (“Photos Page” on page 3-7), you can see that it is possible to devote a lot of effort to managing photos. It can become challenging to manage the flow of photo content, and (even after that effort) you Website visitors will still have the question, “How do I order prints for my scrapbook?”

Solution? Off load the photo issue to a third-party Website that is devoted to supporting photo upload from digital cameras and selling photo prints. There are a number of secure Websites that provide this service (for example <http://www.clarkcolor.com>).

To get your Website visitor to go to the third party Website, add information on the photo page about using the third party service (in the www.clarkcolor.com case, it is a group room). **Figure 4-5** shows an image to put on the photo page. Put info about the service in the image description.

you're invited to join my group room!



Troop 1

Troop 1 now has a secure Group Room where we can share photos and projects! We can also write messages to the group, order prints and gifts of each others' photos and more. This Group Room us protected with a room code. Have fun! Stephanie

address:

room code:

join group room

Want more friends to join? forward this email to them

Clark Color Labs, 10619 Baltimore Avenue, Beltsville, MD 20705

If the 'join group room' button above does not work, copy and paste the link below into your browser

, use room code:

Figure 4-5. Editing Advanced: Improved Photo Sharing

5 UNIT WEBSITE MANAGEMENT

Managing a unit Website well can improve unit communications, operation, and morale. Poor Website management can become a drag on your unit. The following questions can focus your Website management efforts:

- Does all of the need-to-know schedule and event information get posted to your Website in a timely manner? (at least four weeks before each event)
- Do unit meeting plans and committee/SPL-council meeting minutes get posted to your Website in a timely manner? (within one week of meeting)
- Do support documents (for example, permission forms) get posted with enough lead time? (at least one week before due date)
- Do you update your Website calendar with proposed event and meeting dates for the coming year and use the calendar as a starting point proposal during your unit's yearly planning conference?
- Do you periodically (monthly, yearly, etc. ...) perform scheduled Website maintenance (check links, delete outdated files, re-visit aging content, etc. ...)

Achieving a “Yes” or “Almost always” answer to all of these questions is a sound benchmark of a well-managed unit Website. The next section (“[Year Round Website Operation](#)” on page 5-2) breaks each of these items down into achievable tasks. The other sections in this chapter describe ways to make your Website content more effective and how to work with other contributors to your Website.

Year Round Website Operation

To keep your unit Website operating effectively, it is important to approach the task with a well-formed model in mind. One very effective model to follow is an online newspaper (for example, <http://www.nytimes.com>). Why do visitors return to a newspaper Website everyday? Because, the Website is constantly *new*. If you manage to keep up a steady, useful trickle of new items to your Website, you will be able to “train” your scouts, parents, and leaders to use the Website for their news about your unit.

Website & Yearly Planning Conference

Units hold yearly planning conferences to set their calendar and plans for the coming year. One way you can use the Website to help is to populate the calendar with the known council, district and unit events in advance of the conference. It is a lot easier to edit a calendar then fill in a blank one. This task is a challenge the first time you populate the calendar, but gets easier in proceeding years as you can mostly edit dates for repeated events.

It is useful to bring several filtered “views” of the proposed calendar to the planning conference. These various views (filtered event types) can help

focus discussion topics for the meeting. In addition to a full (unfiltered) view of the calendar, you may need year spanning views of:

- Recruiting events
- Training (youth and leader) events
- Unit meeting events
- Unit committee and SPL-council meeting events
- Camping and field trip events
- Council, district, and Order of the Arrow events
- Fund raising events
- Court of honor events
- School vacation events (These should be on the calendar because these influence unit planning.)

By working with these views of the calendar, the conference planners will be able to coordinate unit goals (getting outdoors, promoting advancement, etc. ...) with the unit calendar

Website & Need-To-Know Content Publishing

Website success depends on getting need-to-know information published in a timely manner. The effort to keep this information flowing can be as large or small as you choose to make it.

Updating the Website constantly with highly detailed content takes a big effort (and will probably burn out your Webmaster fairly quickly).

Taking a measured approach to managing your Website posting schedule helps. Try these guidelines:

Plan on performing a Website update following the unit committee and SPL-council meetings each month. Any schedule changes should likely flow from these meetings.

Collect your notes for Website updates in a Webmaster's log book. That way you can track changes and make sure that you (and the requestor) understand the change before it is made.

Plan on doing only one additional Website update each month to apply any changes you collect outside of the committee meetings. This approach limits the time you spend administering the Website (and prevents burn out).

Website & Support Content Publishing

Some of the most useful content on your Website can be the unit committee and SPL-council notes and other unit support documents (forms, newsletters, etc. ...). These documents help your unit succeed in its goals and improve communications.

Where do these documents come from?

The unit leader, committee chair, troop scribe, committee secretary, or round table recorder are all possible sources for these support documents. It is very important that the Webmaster recruit (or ask the committee chair to recruit) these content providers. After they are recruited, the Webmaster can make it easy for the content providers to succeed by providing them with templates for content and establishing a delivery schedule for the content.

Webmasters! Do *not* fall into the trap of becoming the main (or sole) provider of content for the Website. The Website is a tool that the whole unit can (and should) use to communicate effectively. That will not happen if you are the only one providing content.

Website & Periodic Maintenance

One of the problems that can be seen on many unit Websites is that they start to take on the appearance of a weedy garden. The Webmaster (gardener) started out with great plans, but did not keep up the steady effort (weeding, watering, fertilizing) that would keep the Website working (grow the garden). The way to keep the Website maintained is to schedule different types of maintenance, then follow your schedule. Some ways to break down the tasks are:

- Verify accuracy of calendar events for the next two months at each unit committee meeting. Make any needed corrections during your post-meeting update.
- Check the calendar links (if used) for the next month when doing your post-committee meeting update.
- Plan a once a year full site check up (typically when doing the major calendar update during preparation for the yearly planning conference). This check up should include deleting any expired (outdated) content; verifying all the links; and proof-reading all the active, current content on the Website.

Nurturing a Scout Friendly Site


If your Website is not inviting and “friendly” to your scouts, they will not feel comfortable using the Website. The task of making the Website appealing and useful is a lot easier if you talk with your scouts, parents, and leaders about the following:


How do you use the Website? For example, do you use the calendar? Do you use the links?

How would you like to use the Website? For example, would it help to set up a secure chat room for virtual patrol meetings? Do you use the advancement matrix for program planning?

Have you noticed other good ways of using a Website that our unit should try?

These are discussion questions that work well during boards of review, patrol meetings, committee meetings, or SPL-council meetings.

 *Focus on function and utility* when assessing suggestions for change. Many suggestions will have to do with appearance (providing negligible improvement) rather than function (providing measurable improvement).

 *Keeping a clean, professional looking Website* is much more appealing to scouts than plastering your Website with kitchy (childish) clip art images. If your Website looks as though it is trying to be a useful tool, your visitors will treat it as a useful tool.

Supporting Unit Goals

The key to using the Website to support unit goals relies on having a concise statement of those goals. With an idea of the unit goals, you can start to provide support for them.

Local units approach goal setting in a variety of ways, but nationally, the BSA provides a clear statement of unit goals through the quality unit

award. For example, the Centennial Quality Unit award *goal categories* (and ways that you can **support them** with your Website) are:

1. *We will have XX percentage of our direct contact leaders complete Basic Leader Training and Youth Protection Training.* **Website support:** Publish training events on the calendar and training pages. Publish the training matrix report (track leader training in TroopMaster so it can be reported) on the advancement page.
2. *We will provide excellent programs to achieve our goal of XX percent youth retention, recharter on time, and will recruit XX new members.* **Website support:** Publish detailed meeting plans on newsletters page. Publish support documents (for example, merit badge worksheets, camping how-to notes, etc. ...) on the Forms page. Publish deadlines for charter renewal on the calendar page. Publish recruiting events on the calendar page; and publish useful, inviting information on the joining page and parent info page.
3. *In the spirit of the National Parent Initiative, we will recruit XX new parents/adults to assist our unit programs.* **Website support:** Publish recruiting events on the calendar page; and publish useful, inviting information on the joining page and parent info page.
4. *We will have XX percent of our youth earn advancement awards.* **Website support:** Publish the advancement matrix report (track advancement in TroopMaster so it can be reported--remember to set the hide last names feature for youth protection) on the advancement page. Publish meeting and event plans that provide opportunities for youth advancement, so scouts will know of opportunities in advance.
5. *We will have XX percent of our youth participate in at least XX outdoor experiences or group activities during the year.* **Website support:** Publish outdoor and group activities on the calendar (listed for the entire year and provided at the beginning of the year). Make sure to communicate any changes to dates as early as possible. (Do not

just communicate through changing the calendar page!) Publish support documents for activities (permission forms, directions, etc. ...) far in advance of due dates for the forms.

6. *We will conduct annual program planning and will provide the financial resources to deliver a quality program to all members.* **Website support:** Prepare a proposed scouting-year calendar in advance of the yearly planning conference. Provide printed views (filtered by event types) various types of events on the calendar. Publish fund raising events on the calendar page. Publish deadlines for dues/registration fees well in advance of the due date.

Keeping It Useful, Current, and Concise

There are many, many style guides for publishing well-written Web content. If you google on:

"writing style" useful current concise text content document

You find lots of advice. One brief and helpful guide, provide through the Dartmouth College Web Teaching system, is:

- Writing for the Web,
<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~webteach/articles/text.html>

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