

# Campfire Planning

NorthStar 2000

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***One of the most simple and memorable verses to me is the Philmont  
Grace. Do you know it? Do you live it?***

- FOR FOOD** For the food of combined thought from all over our great country, to help us grow wiser in Scouting.
- FOR RAIMENT** For our Scouting uniform, which we have not only the blessing to wear- but the duty to honor.
- FOR LIFE** For a life of freedom in these great United States, a nation unsurpassed anywhere on this fragile planet, where we are truly free to live the aims of Scouting.
- FOR OPPORTUNITY** For the opportunity of Philmont and this scouting event itself- to be here with you- some of the finest in the scouting movement.
- FOR FRIENDSHIP** For those we have met at Philmont- and grown to respect through that common interest- our devotion to the development of the youth.
- AND FELLOWSHIP** To share a laugh- To help a friend in some small way- To share a sunrise- A sunset- This scouting event. And to return, if only for a moment, to our youth again and together climb a mountain- and reach the stars.
- WE THANK YOU GOD** Our thanks goes to the one who we individually believe allows us to share the scouting experience with all.

Mr. Z

## **Agenda**

1. Introductions
2. Show it
  - a. Review of handout
  - b. Discussion of resources
3. Do it
  - a. Plan a campfire
  - b. Perform one element
4. Reflection

# Campfire Planning

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## **Campfire General**

In the beginning the campfire served much the same purpose as it does still today. They were a time to discuss the day's events and talk informally over some issues that were relevant to the outing. They also served as a chance to share stories and song.

Campfires are an element of Scouting that acts as a closure to the day's events. There are different approaches to the campfire. Some Scouters prefer to have formal campfires where a formal program is made with the 'theme' of the camp. This type of campfire follows a set pattern of songs, skits and yells or cheers, a "Scouters Five"/Scoutmaster Minute, a story and some quiet songs for closing. An informal campfire is similar to a sing - a - long. The youth chat amongst themselves and with the leaders, and sing or lead songs or skits as they come to their minds. Songs and recitations and small plays can be performed around the campfire. Everyone should contribute something to it. But in either format a campfire is just that, no cooking or consuming of food is appropriate. If the leadership team and the youth want to sit around the fire after their campfire is complete you may all leave the circle and then return with your mug and snack and continue to tell your stories, but remember to declare the campfire closed before dismissing the attendees. It is one of the happiest hours at a camp and builds many memories.

### ***Safety First***

- Who is in charge? There must be one person in charge of the event. This basic leadership principle should never be broken.
- Establish a "Fire Circle" safe area for your fire. You should ensure a safe distance from all combustibles.
- Ensure a 10 foot distance between the fire and any combustibles.
- Look up at the tree canopy. Tree cover is a combustible that many forget about.
- Establish a safe area for the participants.
- Establish a safe area for the audience.
- Use a water bucket for putting out errant embers during the ceremony.
- Make sure there is enough water for extinguishing the fire at end of the festivities.
- Emergency plan.

### ***Campfire Safety*** (from Scouter Magazine)

The United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service and the National Association of State Foresters give the following campfire safety information:

- Build campfires away from overhanging branches, steep slopes, rotten stumps, logs, dry grass, and leaves. Pile extra wood away from fires.
- Keep plenty of water handy and have a shovel for throwing dirt on the fire if it gets out of control.
- Start with dry twigs and small sticks. Add larger sticks as the fire builds up

- Put the largest pieces of wood on last, pointing them toward the center of the fire, and gradually push them into the flames
- Keep the campfire small. A good bed of coals or a small fire surrounded by rocks gives plenty of heat. Scrape away litter, duff, and any burnable material within a 10-foot-diameter circle
- Be sure your match is out. Hold it until it is cold. Break it so that you can feel the charred portion before discarding.
- Never leave a campfire unattended. Even a small breeze could quickly cause the fire to spread.
- Drown the fire with water. Make sure all embers, coals, and sticks are wet. Move rocks--there may be burning embers underneath
- Stir the remains, add more water, and stir again. Be sure all burned material has been extinguished and cooled. If you do not have water, use dirt. Mix enough soil or sand with the embers. Continue adding and stirring until all material is cooled.
- Feel all materials with your bare hand. Make sure that no roots are burning. Do not bury your coals--they can smolder and break out.

### ***Campfire Etiquette***

Review these points with the youth so all participants know expectations:

- The campfire circle is sacred and always quiet before and after the fire.
- Prohibit flashlights from being used within the circle.
- Make a no-talking rule.
- If wood needs to be added to the fire during the campfire, only the "Keeper of the Flame," or designated individual, may do it. Keep the fire a reasonable size. Fires that are too big can take away the magic and quickly become dangerous.
- Applause takes the form of yells, not clapping.
- Enhance the mystique, add ashes from your campfire pedigree campfire to this new one.
- If you clean up all the coals and other signs of festivity before the next morning, your campers will always think of the campfire site as a special place.
- Keep the program short. If you will offer refreshments later, plan time so that it won't break up a good program.
- For the greatest success, involve as many people as possible in the campfire as leaders of songs or yells or players in skits or stunts.
- If you can, audition songs and skits ahead of time to avoid any possible problems, either with difficulty or poor taste.
- Choose songs you enjoy and know your young members enjoy.
- Stick to the familiar rather than trying to teach a new song, unless it is something really easy, repetitive, and fun.
- Be sure you include parents and special guests as well as campers.
- Avoid song sheets or books, a sure way to destroy the atmosphere. Participants usually turn their backs to the fire in hopes of catching some light to read the words.
- Look for audience feedback. Are they singing and taking part or looking bored? Keep it alive. If a song is too slow, speed it up. If it is really dragging, simply end it and move into a "no fail" song you have up your sleeve.

- Set a brisk pace with minimum breaks between songs.
- Sometimes campers become so caught up in the fun they want to sing every song they've ever heard. You have to be firm, but remind them they can have their own sing song and put in all their favorites at their tent site after the formal campfire is over.
- If someone brings along a musical instrument, ensure that it enhances the experience. If it begins to detract by becoming a "solo" act, because nobody knows the songs or they are all slow ballads, stop the player firmly but politely.
- Announce the next act or song at least one act ahead so that the people involved have time to prepare. If you know who is on next, you need to alert them.
- Keep a set of quickie yells, or songs on hand in case a person, or group, is not ready to perform when the time comes, or you need to stop a performance for some reason.
- For example if, despite your screening, a group begins a skit or stunt in poor taste, stop it. Leadership is sometimes tough. Indicate simply that it is not appropriate and go on with something else. Talk with those involved after the campfire, in private, to explain the reason for your actions.
- Once you've eliminated the problem of poor taste, skits or stunts can still go wrong if the players speak too quietly or position themselves badly (e.g. with backs to the audience). That's another good reason for pre-campfire auditions. To work well and safely, a skit needs good light. The Keeper of the Flame can add small sticks to a dim fire. You might also provide pot lights or kerosene lanterns, as long as they aren't so bright they detract from the atmosphere.
- Keep a firm rein on proceedings to avoid things like poorly timed announcements that can destroy the magic. If some participants begin to cause a distraction, signal another Scouter to tap them on the shoulder and talk quietly to them. If you stop a campfire to lecture noisemakers, it's an automatic downer. Praise in public, criticize in private.

### ***Roles and Responsibilities***

- Designate a Master of Ceremonies. There must be one person in charge of the event. This basic leadership principle should never be broken.
  - Secure attention. Don't talk until you have their attention. Use the scout sign
  - Start the program on time.
  - Follow the fire. Start small, get loud as the fire gets burning brightly.
  - Have all safety and skit equipment ready to go.
  - Have as few rules as possible and enforce them.
  - Avoid "stage waits," keep things moving.
  - Ensure participants know what is expected of them.
  - Avoid trying to teach a new song to a large group. Have patrols perform new songs.
  - Do not allow cheap and vulgar songs, sketches or stories.
  - A scout is kind. Do not allow boos, catcalls, and hazing.
  - Maintain your leadership. Do not allow campers to interrupt you.
  - Be friendly in introductions and generous in praise of participants.
  - Close on time.
- Designate a "Keeper of the Flame"
  - This is the person in charge of the fire.
  - This includes keeping it lit and safe.

- Enforce safety concepts.
- Designate a "Cheerleader" or "Songmaster." This is the person to light up the faces of the participants.
  - Relax. Maintain a positive attitude and have fun
  - Explain to the youth clearly just what they are going to be doing
  - Preserve your sense of humor. Some scouts and scouters may have a hard time carrying a tune
  - Have each patrol sing the song, then get the group to join in.
  - Have a plan. Never ask "what shall we sing tonight?" You will get as many different answers as there are campers.
  - Opening numbers should be well known hits, known and loved by all
  - Closing numbers should be patriotic or inspirational.

### ***Types of Campfires***

Formal campfires:

- Have an MC, a planned program, and a solemn closing.
- Allow the troop to: work together as a unit
- Give an impressive presentation to visitors
- Provide opportunities for leadership to individual Scouts
- Provide opportunities for Scouts to speak, write, plan, and perform the event.

Informal campfires:

- Less planning, and simple.
- Offer the Scoutmaster the opportunity to; talk seriously about a pressing subject and inspire Scouts through discussion, storytelling, or song

Of course all campfires:

- Establish a bond of friendship between Scouts and troop adults
- Increase brotherhood and camaraderie among the Scouts.

### ***Some Program Sources***

- The MacScouter has a comprehensive book to help you make your campfire a success. See the Gateway webpage for this resource.
- The BSA Publication Troop Program Resources, For Scout Troops and Varsity Teams has a section on campfire ceremonies.
- "BSA Cub Scout Leader How-To Book" BSA ISBN 0-8395-3831-6.
- "Creative Campfires" Half of the book contains songs, and the rest includes skits, stories, yells and tips to set up an entertaining campfire. (Sorry - no ISBN, but it can be ordered worldwide from the BSA Supply Division - Fax +1-704-588-5822).
- "Campfire Stories. Things That go Bump in the Night" by William Forgey, M.D. Contains 21 campfire stories, with large typeface summaries. Also includes the author's suggestions for how to be successful at telling campfire stories. ISBN 0-934802-23-8 published by ICS Books.
- Check out the Internet for lots of helping ideas.

## **Planning**

The structure of a magic campfire is like the shape of the fire. It builds up slowly from the lighting and opening to a peak, then subsides gradually to the closing as the fire burns down to embers.

The opening includes parading to the formal circle, introductions, the fire lighting, and a short, upbeat opening verse that sets the mood and guidelines for the fire and welcomes people to the magic of the experience. You may deliver it dramatically with arms in the air or holding a hand over the fire. You may involve participants by having them echo a line or, if you are using a "magic start", asking them to concentrate to inspire the fire to light. Perhaps you'll have a number of torch bearers light the fire as you declare it open.

Build up from the opening with some well known songs, a few rounds, some fun songs, some action songs, a game and stunt or two and, at the peak of excitement, skits and yells.

Bring down things slowly with a few rousing songs, some quieter songs, a story or Scouter's Five, a spiritual song or two, vespers and taps, and a closing verse.

You might include a short Scout silence before the verse or invite participants to pause for a moment to listen to night sounds or reflect and be thankful. Many campfire leaders end the verse with "I now declare this campfire closed" but, as Lewis Carroll once said, "They don't seem to have any rules in particular; at least, if there are, nobody attends to them."

### ***Successful themes/ideas***

Campfires bring closure to the day, the week, or the event. We are all familiar with comedic campfire programs. Troop campfires can be so much more. That does not mean that silliness is wrong. Sharing a laugh is a good start to a sense of brotherhood. But consider the campfire a time for other things, too.

#### **Everyone has a Voice**

Talk over the day's events. Design a campfire stick. Find a piece of a dead wood about 12-18" long and two inches in diameter. Peel the bark. Carve in the troop number and each Scouts initials. Decorate by tying on leather strips or colored ribbons. Pass the campfire stick around the circle. Whoever holds the stick speaks about the day.

#### **Storytelling**

Appoint one adult to tell a story. Other stories (scary or funny) may be told, but this one should teach a lesson or inspire. Native American stories are a good source.

#### **Singing**

If someone in your troop plays the guitar, remember that guitars, campfires, and appropriate songs, can soothe, calm, and inspire a boy. Those who have sung the Philmont hymn or Scout Vesper around a campfire, accompanied by a guitar, will remember it vividly.

### Carry the Spirit

While policing the troop site at camp, have each Scout pick up a dead twig - 3-4 inches long. Collect and mark the collection as "Scout camp." Bring the spirit of camp to the first back home troop campfire by having each Scout throw one of the twigs into the campfire and tell what he liked best about camp. Say the Scout Law together to close.

### Silly Songs with a Purpose

Is there any redeeming value in singing silly songs? "Yes," says Bob Geier, the Chartered Organization Rep from Troop 8, Great Sauk Trail Council. His troop has campfires on weekend campouts. "Our tradition centers mostly around singing silly songs and parodies. It started with a Scouter who sang many bizarre songs. Soon Scouts started writing their own lyrics to familiar tunes and now sing 'Snow White and the Seven Bodies' and 'That Camp Gerber Sand.'" Campfire always ends with Scout Vesper. As to value, Geier says, "Silly songs tend to get pulled out in the rain and mud and uphill trudges, bringing good humor and cheer to otherwise grim times."

### Advancement

Some Wendie Howland, Assistant Leader with Troop 47 in the Cape Cod & Island Council sees the troop campfire as an opportunity for advancement. Communications merit badge requires the Scout to serve as master of ceremonies. "We work with the Senior Patrol Leader to have him check who needs the badge, and consider this when planning."

### History

Have someone with a long Scouting career (adult Leader, older Scout, or guest) bring his campfire ashes pedigree, patch vest, or Scout blanket to the campfire and tell the memories it holds. Conclude by challenging Scouts to record their own Scouting history.

### Arrow of Light Ceremonies

Webelos stand silently by the fire as a distant drum heralds the arrival of Chief Akela and his escort (one Boy Scout or a contingent of Scouts). When he reaches the fire, the Cubmaster and Webelos Leader(s) present the candidates. Akela signals his approval by placing his right hand on the shoulder of each Scout. With chalk, the Webelos leader draws an arrow on each Scout's forehead. All recite the Scout Law together and stand in silence as the drum beat follows Akela into the darkness.

### Other Ceremonies

Campfires make a ceremony impressive and inspirational. They work well with advancement, crossovers, recognition, or new Scout induction ceremonies. Even Eagle Courts of Honor have been successfully held at campfires. This is especially true when using a Native American or outdoors theme.

***Planning Worksheet***

Use a campfire planning worksheet like the next two pages. The back side is where you plan the program. The front side is the program agenda, in proper order, used by the Master of Ceremonies.

Have your Dens or Patrols work on skits, songs, stunts, etc. Plan a time when a representative of each Den or Patrol will come to you with the name and type of each item that they will do. Write them on the back side, in the appropriate place, in no particular order. Make sure that if you are not familiar with something they plan to do that you have them perform it for you -- this could avoid an embarrassing situation.

When you have all possible skits, cheers, songs -- even those that the Master of Ceremonies will lead -- written on the planning section, consider how to put them together into a program. A Campfire Program should start slowly and quietly, build to a high level, then taper off to a quiet closing. Bracket everything with appropriate opening and closing songs or readings. Mix up the items in the middle for variety. You might consider some stories near the end to wind things down before the closing.

CAMPFIRE PROGRAM WORKSHEET

Place _____	Campers notified: _____	Area set up by _____
Date _____	Campfire planning meeting _____	_____
Time _____	M.C. _____	Campfire built by _____
Camp Director's approval: _____	Song leader _____	Fire put out by _____
_____	Cheemaster _____	Cleanup by _____

Spot	Title of Stung, Song or Story	By _____	Time
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			
15			
16			
	<b>Closing</b>		

CAMPFIRE PROGRAM PLANNER

<b>Cheer Planner</b>	<b>Spot</b>

<b>Song Planner</b>	<b>Spot</b>

<b>Campfire Program Planner</b>			
<b>Group or Individual</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Spot</b>

## Campfire Openings

### ***Campfire Pedigree***

A campfire pedigree is a jar filled with ashes from all the campfires you have participated in along with a written record of the event. A campfire is one of the first images that comes to mind when scouting is mentioned. The campfire, and its fellowship, is at the very core of scouting. We remember the wonderful times we have had around a campfire with our friends and leaders. Think of your own experiences? Wouldn't you like to be able to review all of those good times? Create a lasting memory with a Campfire Pedigree.

- Select a small jar to hold your campfire pedigree. A baby food jar works well. It is important that it seals well and is relatively sturdy. Plastic is best. Mine is a Wylers bouillon cube jar. It is glass but is of a sturdy construction and has a good lid.
- Select a slip of paper that can be easily rolled or folded for the pedigree document. Try a piece of paper tape from an adding machine. Use a paper clip to keep it rolled up in a scroll. Use some sort of plastic bag to wrap the scroll. I have found a zip lock bag from a fishing lure to be the correct size.
- Write your name and unit number on the lid and the scroll.
- At your next campfire, after the embers have been extinguished and cooled, scoop some of the ashes into the jar. On the paper, record the location, the date, and the reason for the campfire. Include a special note to remind yourself of the event. Put the paper in the plastic wrap, place it in the jar of ashes and close the lid.
- Bring the pedigree to your next campfire. At the beginning of this campfire dump your ashes in the fire after it is burning. Don't dump the paper! At campfires end, again, scoop some cooled ashes into the jar. Record the new information on the paper tape.

### ***The Campfire Ash Ceremony***

Here is a script for a ceremony to use your campfire pedigree ashes:

*Legend has it that Baden-Powell would always take a small amount of ashes from a ceremonial campfire and then spread these ashes into the next campfire. The main purpose of these ashes is to share with you the memories of past campfires and to bring to all scouts and scouters the international aspect of the world brotherhood of scouting.*

*Will anyone with campfire ashes please come forward and join me.*

*The ashes I spread into this campfire carry memories of past campfires dating back to 1907. They have been carried around the world to over 917 scouting campfires in 53 countries where scouting fellowship has been shared.*

*I will now charge these ashes to this campfire.*

*"We carry our friendships with us in these ashes from other campfires with comrades in other lands. May the joining of the past fires with the leaping flames of this campfire, symbolize once more the unbroken chain that binds scouts and guides of all nations together. With greetings from our brothers and sisters around the world, I add these ashes, and the fellowship therein, to our campfire."*

### ***Magic Powder***

When telling a particularly ghostly or magical story, throw a handful of powdered coffee creamer over the fire as a "spell" is being cast in the story. The particles are very fine, and being an "edible oil product" the powder catches fire in a myriad of sparkly bits that are quickly gone. Kinda cool...neato special effect. Plain old granulated sugar also works.

## **Campfire Program**

### ***Staging Skits***

- Skits are usually never longer than 3 to 5 minutes and are ideally somewhere around 90 seconds.
- Sources of your skits are imagination, Leader magazine, jokes from books, Reader's Digest, campfires, kids, and other leaders.
- See the Gateway Webpage for a copy of the MacScouter's Big Book of Skits.
- Watch out for scratch skits from the kids, because they usually aren't funny, are too long and don't make any sense, not to mention the kids forget what they're supposed to say and do. A real bore to watch.
- Reserve the right to edit or veto the kids' skits, within reason of course. You've got to avoid swearing, hitting, and stupid, no-sense skits.
- A good way to get the kids involved in a good skit is to provide them with a choice of about two or three skits and let them choose a tried and proven skit, then help them modify it to the number of kids available and the theme.
- Rehearse the skit beforehand. It will increase the kids' confidence and can help to avoid whispering, fumbling, amnesia, arguing about who says what, and all sorts of problems.
- This task is impossible, but essential to work on. The boys have to speak up so that everyone can hear them. Who cares how good the joke is if you can't hear it. That's where rehearsing comes in handy.
- Cue cards can be useful for the kids so that they can remember their lines. Make poster size cards with large, simple writing.
- Watch out for using or modifying skits that touch on sensitive topics. What used to be considered acceptable jokes no longer are, such as those targeting ethnic or handicapped groups. Keep to topics of common ground.
- In your skits, a volunteer is usually a pre-selected person who you seem to pluck out of the audience, but of course is planted there. In a pinch, you can just choose your volunteers at random and give them instructions as part of the act.
- A victim, on the other hand, is a person who is chosen at random or pre-selected (without their knowledge) to be the butt of the joke. Of course, discretion is advised. Try your good humored leader or that Beaver leader who just won't run out of energy.
- Designate a Cheermaster. A Cheermaster is someone who keeps track of group songs, yells, cheers and skits.
- Build up a repertoire of one man skits, or, if you have one of those friends who's been with you in your Scouting endeavors since you were a Scout and probably will always be with you

till beyond the grave, act as a team and memorize some skits that without even a moment's notice you can use to fill in a space.

### ***Songs***

See the Gateway Web page for the following types of songs:

- Action Songs
- Traditional Songs
- Scouting Songs
- Camp Specific Songs
- Patriotic Songs
- National Anthem
- Inspirational Songs
- Reverent Songs
- Rounds
- Silly Songs

### ***Cheers***

Applause stunts are a great way to recognize a person or den/patrol in a troop/pack meeting for some accomplishment they have performed. Be sure before you start that everyone knows and understands the applause stunt and how to do it. Applause stunts serve more than one purpose they not only provide recognition but also help liven up a meeting. Applause stunts need to be fun. Strive for quality of performance in your stunts.

#### How to Make a Cheers Box

Find a Cheer laundry detergent box. Print out these cheers, yells and applause on card stock. Cut the card stock up so that one cheer is on each piece of paper. Put them all in the Cheer box. Take the box to your meetings or campfires. When it is time for a cheer, have a Scout take the cheer out of the box and lead it.

### ***Story Telling***

These are general guidelines to try. It will take some trial and error to find what works for you. I've seen things work great for someone, but I have been unable to make them work. I have been able to adapt them and make them work.

#### When To Tell Stories

- Never repeat a story
- Never read a story
- Wait for it to be very dark and the campfire to be nothing but embers
- Insist on complete silence
- When the story is over end the campfire
- Send the scouts to bed immediately (or after a quick mug up)
- Never tell them "it's just a story"
- If they ask if it's true, try lines like "What do you think?"

### Choosing A Story

You can write your own story, use one that's written or modify a story that's written. But, the final story needs to fit both you and your audience. As the workbook *The Entertaining Speaker* from Toastmasters International says, "It should suit your personal style and outlook on life. If you aren't comfortable with a story or a set of funny lines, your material won't go over well as part of an entertaining speech."

If you are writing an entertaining story, your personal experiences are a good starting point, but you don't have to stick to the facts. You can stretch the facts, combine different events or even modify a joke to fit. Also, a story doesn't have to be funny to be entertaining; the ghost stories and the "Winter Cub Story" are entertaining by being dramatic.

If you are using an existing story, the workbook *Storytelling* from Toastmasters International offers the following points to consider.

- The age of the audience. Are your listeners adults, teenagers or children? Different age groups prefer different types of stories.
- The type of audience. Are your listeners boys, girls, men women?
- The social and intellectual levels of your listeners. Generally, younger children enjoy stories with plot and action. Older children and adults like stories with more humor and interplay with characters. All ages enjoy rhythm and movement of event in stories.
- Stories should be well paced, with few slow and no dull spots.
- Consider how your story will fit with other events. For example, if the story will be used at the beginning of a campfire, it should have a lot of excitement and energy. If the story will be used near the end, it should be quieter and more thoughtful.
- Stories are usually better told than acted out. If you act them out they are more of a skit.
- The gestures also depend on the audience. You may, on occasion, have to adapt your gestures to fit the size and nature of your audience. The larger the audience, the broader and slower your gestures should be. Young audiences are usually attracted to a speaker who uses vigorous gestures, but older, more conservative groups may feel irritated or threatened by a speaker whose physical actions are too powerful.

### ***Walk-ons***

The style of a walk-on is simple. A walk-on should in general be pre-arranged with the person who is supposed to be up there talking. If it is not pre-arranged it can be more of a practical joke. While the leader is talking, a Scout walks on stage doing or saying something. The leader responds accordingly, usually in an exasperated way, and the scout then says the groaner punch line.

## Campfire Closings

### ***Taps*** (From Scouts-L, attributed to Bill Cooper SM Troop 237)

Taps. A haunting melody. Do you know how it originated? Here are two views:

1. We have all heard the haunting melody of "Taps." It's the song that gives us that lump in our throats and usually tears in our eyes. But do you know the story behind the song? If not, I think you will be pleased to find out about its humble beginnings. Reportedly, it all began in 1862 during the Civil War, when Union Army Captain Robert Ellicombe was with his men near Harrison's Landing, Virginia. The Confederate Army was on the other side of the narrow strip of land. During the night, Captain Ellisombe heard the moans of a soldier who was severely wounded on the field. Not knowing if it was a Union or Confederate soldier, the Captain decided to risk his life and bring the stricken man back for medical attention. Crawling on his stomach through the gunfire, the Captain reached the stricken soldier and began pulling him toward the encampment. When the Captain finally reached his own lines, he discovered it was actually a Confederate soldier, but the soldier was dead. The Captain lit a lantern and suddenly caught his breath and went numb with shock. In the dim light he saw the face of the soldier. It was his own son. The boy had been studying music in the South when the war broke out. Without telling his father, the boy enlisted in the Confederate Army. The following morning, heartbroken, the father asked permission to give his son a full military burial despite his enemy status. His request was only partially granted. The Captain had asked if he could have a group of Army band members play a funeral dirge for his son at the funeral. The request was denied since the soldier was a Confederate. But, out of respect for the father, they did say they could give him one musician. The Captain chose a bugler. He asked the bugler to play a series of musical notes he had found on a piece of paper in the pocket of the dead youth's uniform. This wish was granted. The haunting melody, which we now know as "Taps" used at military funerals, was born.

*Day is done /Gone the sun/From the lakes, From the hills, From the sky  
All is well, safely rest, God is nigh.*

*Fading light/Dims the sight/And a star, Gems the sky, Gleaning bright  
From afar, Drawing nigh, Falls the night.*

*Thanks and praise/For our days/Neath the sun, Neath the stars, Neath the sky  
As we go, This we know, God is nigh.*

2. Taps was written by Union General Dan Butterfield, to replace the regulation call for lights out, which he didn't feel was musical enough. He called his bugler into his tent one night, told him he wanted something that would evoke the feeling of a camp settling in for the night, and hummed his idea. The bugler played it back, he changed it a little, the bugler played, etc. until they arrived at the tune. Other buglers heard it, liked it, and started using it and it eventually became official. Butterfield also wrote other calls specific to his command so his troops would know their bugler from others in the heat of battle. (source: "The Army of the Potomac", by Bruce Catton). From Scouts-L, Pete Gerlach, Asst. Scoutmaster, Troop

**Scout Vespers** *(Sung to tune of Oh-Tannenbaum)*

Softly falls the light of day, While our camp-fire fades away;  
Silently each Scout should ask 'Have I done my daily task?'  
'Have I kept my honor bright?' 'Can I guiltless sleep tonight?'  
'Have I done and have I dared, in Everything to be prepared?'

## **After The Main Event**

- Cleaning up a campfire's debris so that the area may retain a natural appearance requires just as much effort as building a fire.
- Make sure the fire is "out cold" before disposing of it.
- A good test is if the coals feel cool when you place your hand on them.
- Scatter the cold ashes, replace the soil, and return the site to its natural condition.
- You may bury the coals from your fire, sometimes it is easier to remove them from the area.
- The coals may be placed in a natural depression in the ground, and covered with dirt, or they may be spread where no one will see them.
- Finally, remember to replace the soil over the original campfire site.
- If there is an opportunity get the leaders together immediately after, before the cracker barrel and perform a reflection on what went well during the event.