

JANUARY 18, 2026

[www.gamehavenbsa.org](http://www.gamehavenbsa.org)

GAMEHAVEN SCOUTS BSA

# NEWSLETTER



Gamehaven Scout Office will be closed  
Monday, January 19th  
In Honor of  
Martin Luther King Jr. Day



## NYLT - Scheduled in October This Year

For the first time, we're offering NYLT over the course of two weekends in the fall, to better accommodate our Scouts and families.

We're looking for 24 scouts who are at least first-class scouts, and ages 13-17, to help us pilot this new evolution of leadership training. These Scouts will have to be committed, enthusiastic, and excited to try something new with our youth and adult staff! Does that sound like you? Sign up today!

### WHY ATTEND NYLT?

**NYLT** transforms the lives of the youth who attend, turning Leaders of others into dynamic Leaders of Leaders, creating the Leaders of tomorrow that today so desperately demands.

### HOW DOES NYLT WORK?

**NYLT** is an intensive course where youth teach youth leadership lessons and skills of leadership covering 14 core modules.

It is a training course that models the ideal unit where each day is a week in the life of a unit. Youth see youth modeling the leadership tools they are teaching, and the participants get to practice and hone the skills they are learning.

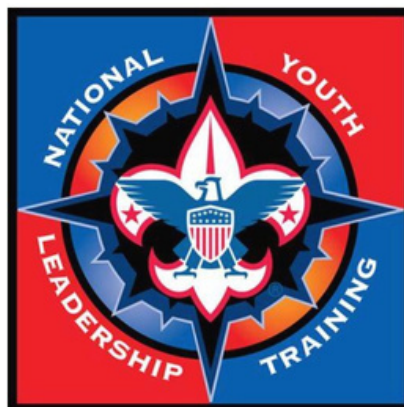
### WHO CAN ATTEND?

Registered Scouts who have attained First Class rank and are either 13 years old by July 9th or have finished 8th grade, have mastered First Class camping skills, and are ready to be away from home for a week and engage with the course. Completion of Introduction to Leadership Skills for Troops (ILST) within the troop is strongly recommended. At least three female staff will be present at all times and appropriate accommodations are made for female participants.

Scoutmasters must approve all participant registrations. It is strongly recommended that the troop cover 50% of the cost to attend (\$125 per Scout), as the skills taught will benefit the troop for years to come!

<https://gamehavenbsa.org/nylt>

Click on the link above to read more about NYLT, get the dates, Information on ISLT, and parent/leader guide.



## 250th Anniversary Committee

### Hello Scouts and Scouters,

The Gamehaven Council Activities and Civic Service committee is in need of dedicated and excited volunteers to help us run amazing service projects recognizing the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of our nation. If you are willing to give us ideas and help find meaningful work to do, please reach out to committee chair Karl Kruger at

[karl.kruger@gmail.com](mailto:karl.kruger@gmail.com)

**UNITS:** Gamehaven Council, in partnership with the National Council of Scouting America, is excited to be facilitating and encouraging the Service 365 initiative this year. Units that perform 250 hours of community service between all of their members (including adults) between February 8<sup>th</sup> and December 31<sup>st</sup> will receive a special recognition from Gamehaven Council.

***More information coming soon!***



## Gamehaven Council Online

Did you know that Gamehaven Council has a number of online presences? Check it out:

- **FACEBOOK:** [facebook.com/gamehaven](https://facebook.com/gamehaven)
- **INSTAGRAM:** <https://www.instagram.com/scoutsgamehaven/>
- **YOUTUBE:** <https://www.youtube.com/@gamehavenscouting>
- **BLUESKY:** <https://bsky.app/profile/scoutsgamehaven.bsky.social>
- **TIKTOK:** <http://tiktok.com/@scoutsgamehaven>

In addition to our social media channels above, we have a few online resource pages:

- **MAIN WEBSITE:** <https://gamehavenbsa.org>
- **CAMP WEBSITE:** <https://gamehavenbsa.org/camp>
- **FLICKR** (Online Photo Album): <https://www.flickr.com/photos/gamehavenbsa/>

If you're interested in helping us curate these online platforms, please reach out to us at

[brady.geary@scouting.org](mailto:brady.geary@scouting.org)

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## Welcome, New Employee Brad Walters

Please welcome Brad Walters to our team. Brad has joined our council as a District Associate and will serve units in both the Hiawatha and Wakpaota Districts.

Brad was born in Springfield Illinois and in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade, his family moved to Bonita Springs, FL. Brad's favorite Scouting memory as a youth was paddling the BWCA and his troop camping next to a 20' waterfall. Brad is an Eagle Scout, Vigil Honor Member of the Order of the Arrow, achieved the Scouts BSA STEM NOVA Award, and is a triple crown winner (attended 3 of the 4 high adventure bases). Outside of Scouting, Brad has hiked the Florida Trail, enjoys "Elk Shed Hunting" (looking for antlers in the wilderness), and is a fan of beef ribs.



Welcome to the Gamehaven Council, Brad!

Brad can be reached via email at: [bradw@scouting.org](mailto:bradw@scouting.org) or by phone at 507-361-5346.

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## Annual Council Program Kick-Off Event

Please join us for the 2026 Program Kick-off Event on **Tuesday, February 24** at Hosanna Lutheran Church – 2815 57 St. NW Rochester.

The event will begin at 6:30 pm and will be in-person. Dinner will be provided for 2 people per unit. We will be handing out program information and supplies for the remainder of the calendar year and winter months of 2027. ***Please RSVP by February 17th.*** To Sign up click on the link. <https://scoutingevent.com/299-kickoff26>



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## Some Fascinating Fun Facts of Scouting

- The Scout handshake is done with the left hand, symbolizing trust and friendship.
- The Boy Scouts of America played a role in promoting conservation early on, with President Theodore Roosevelt serving as the organization's ***honorary president*** from 1910 to 1915.
- The BSA's "**ScoutReach**" initiative is dedicated to expanding Scouting opportunities to underserved communities and youth facing challenging circumstances.
- During both World War I and II, Scouts were actively encouraged to start what were known as "**victory gardens**." These gardens served a dual purpose: easing food shortages and making a valuable contribution to the overall war effort.
- In 1988, Scouts undertook a remarkable effort by amassing over 65 million containers of food in the Inaugural Scouting for Food campaign.

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## Winter Klondike - Happening Jan 30-Feb 1st

**WELCOME!** The Gamehaven Council Camporee Committee is excited to host the 2026 Winter Camporee. We welcome you to Gamhaven Scout Camp as your units embark on the "Amazing Race for Klondike Gold", a test of Scout skills, knowledge, teamwork and common sense. The event will use the Amazing Race format and will require scouts to register in Sled Teams of 8-12 Scouts. Smaller Troops will be asked to register with other Troops to reach the minimum Sled Team of 8 Scouts.

**NEW THIS YEAR: PROVISIONAL TROOP #299!** Are you interested in attending, but your troop isn't coming to camp? Sign up with our Provisional Troop! Led by experienced Scouters, you will participate with the rest of the camporee team as Troop 299. Registration costs an additional \$10 to cover food.

Register today or learn more at <https://scoutingevent.com/299-klondike26>

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## Winter Klondike - Arrow of Light Scouts Welcome !

Are you the Den Leader or a parent of an Arrow-Of-Light (5<sup>th</sup> Grade) den? You are invited to join your associated Scouts BSA troop at the Winter Klondike on January 30th-February 1<sup>st</sup>, or just for the day on January 31<sup>st</sup>. You can learn more about this exciting event at

<https://scoutingevent.com/299-klondike26>

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## Ice Fishing Derby- Saturday, Feb. 7th

**CALLING ALL ICE FISHERS** - Experts, novices, and newcomers to the hobby alike! The Gamehaven Ice Fishing Derby, held at the Gamehaven Reservoir by Gamehaven Council, Scouting America, is approaching. Fishers will receive help from experts, free gear checkouts, tips and pointers, a hot lunch, and entrance in all of our ice fishing derby categories including:

- Most Fish
- Funniest Fish Photo
- Biggest Fish
- Smallest Fish
- And more!

Register online at <https://scoutingevent.com/299-icefishing26>

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## Ultimate Sled Rally - One Night Only!

Come to the Gamehaven Sledding Hill on **Saturday, February 7th from 5-8pm**, for a night of Ultimate Sledding. Our team has created the most EPIC sledding hill you can imagine; lights, music, hot cocoa, a warming house, and so. much. more. We really just can't wait to share with you how much fun you'll have at this one-night event. Proceeds help fund construction and development of Gamehaven Scout Camp.

Register online at <https://scoutingevent.com/299-sledding26> -**Deadline to register February 6<sup>th</sup> (noon)**

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## RATA (Range & Target Activities) Update

2025 was a banner year for RATA at Gamehaven Scout Camp! We onboarded three new Range Safety Officers, two new shotgun instructors, and two new Archery/BB Gun/Slingshot rangemasters, and offered RATA programming at the Spring and Fall Camporees, Order of the Arrow Section Conclave, five Family Adventure sessions, and multiple open shoots.

To keep the momentum going in 2026, we need more volunteers. Many hands make light work, and we're trying to deepen the bench. There are several options to become involved:

### Range Safety Officer (RSO)

A least one Range Safety Officer is necessary to operate the shotgun range. To obtain the credential, one must complete the NRA Basic Range Safety Officer Course.

The next course close to Gamehaven Council is on January 17, 2026, in Spicer, Minnesota.

Contact Eric Holien, 320-226-3225, to sign up. Cost is \$50.00.

### Shotgun Instructor

No classes currently scheduled

### Archery/BB Gun/Slingshot Rangemasters

These volunteers operate the Archery, BB Gun, and Slingshot ranges, primarily for Cub Scout programming.

- Northern Star Scouting offers the course several times a year; to register, search for courses at <https://www.northernstar.org/news/enavigator/shooting-sports-trainings>
- Gamehaven Council will offer this training on April 25, 2026. Contact Rob Wilkinson, 612-214-8768 or [Robert.m.wilkinson@gmail.com](mailto:Robert.m.wilkinson@gmail.com), to sign up.

We're flexible in offering this training, and require only two participants.

If you can't make April 25, 2026, let Rob Wilkinson know and we'll schedule additional sessions.

Watch the newsletter for additional training opportunities!

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## Calling All Makers!

**The bad news:** Wasps are a constant problem at Gamehaven Scout Camp.

**The good news:** Wasps aren't very bright.

Apparently, wasps won't build a new nest near an existing nest, and have a hard time telling the difference between real and fake nests. For 2026, the Logistics, Health, and Safety team is experimenting with 3D printed wasp nests, which we'll install strategically around camp in the hope of discouraging new pests.

If you're a 3D printing enthusiast, we can use your help! We're looking for volunteers to 3D print dummy/decoy wasp nests. These can be any size, though preferably in a realistic color...white, grey, brown, are all good. A couple of links are below, but any similar design will do!

<https://www.thingiverse.com/search?q=wasp+nest&page=1>

<https://makerworld.com/en/search/models?keyword=wasp+nest>





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## Recognize Great Scouting Leaders

**HEY LEADERS!** – did you know that you can qualify for, or nominate a deserving person for, a great number of awards that get recognized by the Gamehaven Council? Read along to see brief descriptions of the awards you can earn or nominate for, and make sure to turn in all nominations by February 14<sup>th</sup>!

- **Den Leader Training Award:** To recognize amazing den leaders who have completed training, tenure, and performance requirements.
- **Gamehaven Scouter of the Year:** To recognize extraordinary adult leaders in packs, troops, ships, and districts who have given back to their unit more than they have received.
- **Fretwell Outstanding Educator Award: The Outstanding Educator Award** — also referred to as the Fretwell Award, after Elbert Fretwell, the BSA's second Chief Scout Executive and a former professor of education at Columbia University — is presented to teachers, educational support staff, and school administrators who instill Scouting values in their students.
- **William D. Boyce New Unit Organizer Award:** The William D. Boyce New-Unit Organizer Award is presented to recognize volunteers who organize one or more traditional Scouting units.
- **District Award of Merit:** The District Award of Merit is a council award presented by districts to Scouters who render service of an outstanding nature at the district level. The award is made available annually on the basis of 1 for each 25 traditional units or fraction thereof.
- **Veteran's Award:** The veteran's award recognizes those dedicated volunteers who have spent a number of consecutive years registered in Scouting, in 5-year increments.

Learn more about these awards and turn in nominations early by going to

<https://gamehavenbsa.org/resources/for-leaders/adult-recognitions/>

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## Silver Beaver Nominations Due by Feb. 14th

The Silver Beaver is one of, if not the, highest awards that a local council can offer its members, and is annually given to two Gamehaven Scouters of the highest pedigree. This award was introduced in 1931 and is a council-level distinguished service award of the Boy Scouts of America.

- **Who is Eligible:** Recipients of this award are registered Scouters who have made an impact on the lives of youth through service given to the council.
- **Who can Nominate:** A registered Scouter must submit nominations for the Silver Beaver award.
- **Selected By:** Selected by the Council Selection Committee, and approved by the National Court of Honor.



**THIS FORM TAKES A WHILE!** Nominations are due absolutely no later than February 14th, 2026, so start the process now. <https://gamehavenbsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Silver-Beaver-Award-website-app.pdf>

## Hiker Direct Program Offers Great Discounts

ALPS Mountaineering stands out as a dedicated partner in outdoor gear, offering exclusive pricing to Scouts, Scout leaders, and parent volunteers through its Hiker Direct program, specifically designed for Scouting members. This initiative ensures that Scouting families have access to high-quality gear at affordable prices, enhancing their outdoor experiences. Being a part of Hiker Direct allows you to purchase most of the gear on the website at roughly 40% off MSRP, every day of the year! Hikers direct also offers a great referral program offering 5\$ credits for every scout referred to the program. Hiker Direct started in 1999 with the goal of getting more youth outdoors. Being a part of various scouting groups can get pricey for parents, especially if they have more than one child involved, by offering deals on reliable gear 24/7, it would allow more youth to have a good experience while camping and hiking, and they'll continue to enjoy the outdoors for years to come.



Link to website: <https://hikerdirect.com/>

### REWARDS PROGRAM

**GET MORE  
FOR YOUR  
ADVENTURE**

- ✓ Easy to Earn
- ✓ Easy to Redeem

**500  
POINTS**

Get 500 points for every new scout referral who signs up.

**= 1 pt**

For every \$1 spent, earn 1 point.

**24/7  
SAVINGS**

Redeem points anytime at checkout.

There is no limit on how many points you can earn!

## Gamehaven Council Annual Business Meeting

Our Council Will be Holding Our Annual Business Meeting

**Thursday, March 19th @ 6pm**

Via zoom.

**Who:** Chartered Organization Representatives are invited to participate - please pre-register in advance

**When:** Thursday, March 19th at 6:00 pm

**Where:** Zoom meeting - Please RSVP in advance of the meeting using the link below :

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/MyIzD9wRtmfCa-UwP-fJg>

**Why:** Approve the Gamehaven Council officers and board members

**Other:** If you have new board member recommendations or thoughts, please email those names and their contact information to John Devlin at [devlin@miiq.com](mailto:devlin@miiq.com)

**Thank You**