

## A little About Sleeping Bags

I wanted to share some resources and information for everyone in Troop 512. With the holiday's approaching, I wanted to share some resources if Santa is considering getting a back pack or sleeping bag for your Scout (son).

Buying a backpack is like buying shoes, it must fit well. You do not want to buy one that you will outgrow too quickly and you do not want to buy one that is too big in the beginning. The retail locations below have a great selection and staff to help you choose. You want to choose a pack that can store your clothing, sleeping bag, sleeping pad, tent if necessary for about 3 days. When we back pack, your scout will also need to carry food and extra water, so it should have room for this as well. There are two types of back packs, an internal frame and external frame, both have their strengths and weaknesses and are personal choices. There are times I wish I had an external frame and there are times I like having my internal frame pack. Stick with some of the name brands like Kelty, North Face, Gregory, etc. as they are a great quality and can last a life time. You can find packs to meet these needs in the \$80.00 - \$100.00 range, they can get very expensive.

Buying sleeping bags is also important, you want a bag that will keep you warm in the winter and comfortable in the summer. There are multiple ways to classify sleeping bags and I will narrow them down to two. There are Texas Winter (3.5 season) and Summer Bags. You also have the choice of a mummy bag vs rectangle bag, this is a personal choice and stick with the Synthetic, down bags require a little more care and are very expensive.

A 3.5 season bags range from 5 degrees to 35 degrees, the temperature rating means if you are dry and sheltered and using that temperature rating of 30 degrees, you will not freeze to death, you may be cold, but you will not die. I recommend a temperature range of 15 - 20 degrees for the winter camping as well have experienced temps as low as 20 degrees. Bag weight and stuff ability are very important, the lighter the bag, the more expensive they are. Try to choose the lightest bag in your budget and they should come with a stuff sack and a storage sack. Bags should not be stored under compression, they lose their loftiness and ability to keep us warm. Bags should be stored, allowing them to stay fluffy. You can find a good winter bag for \$90 and up, but should be able to find one for \$90 - \$110.

A summer bag has a rating of 40 degrees and above, I personally like a 50 degree bag and when it is really hot, I just use a sheet and light weight blanket. A few years ago I purchased a fleece bag for my son and he loved it as a summer bag, we still use them. They are easy to roll, small and light. Summer bags range in price from \$15 for a fleece bag at Walmart and up. Keep in mind. A small fleece bag can be inserted into a winter bag to add additional warmth. Sleeping pads are a great addition to anyone's night sleep. Sleeping pads are more for warmth in the winter than comfort, they add a thermal layer between you and the ground. Closed cell pads have the best R factor and most durable. The prices range from \$20 on up to \$200 plus, the more comfort you want to add the higher the price.