

Hello Scouts, Parents, Counselors and Leaders,

Welcome to this new expanded Virtual World!

The virtual world is always changing and evolving as new technology is developed and others retired. For many of us, it may be a new world of uncharted territory where they need to spend time learning the ropes so please be patient and help if you know how.

Looking at some of today's technology like Google Classrooms or Zoom's added features of Break Out Rooms is very different from what we on the Council Team are used to, so we will be learning new technology right along with everyone. It is important to ask questions, share new technology, raise concerns, offer feedback and more as we explore and keep in mind.... Scouts' SAFETY FIRST.

Second, it is vital to remember we are members of the Scouting Community! In any virtual setting or dialogue, we should always conduct our actions and words to reflect the Scout Oath, Law, Motto, Slogan and Outdoor Code. Proudly wear your uniform in video conferencing and chats so pictures taken and shared (posted) virtually on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and others, reflect a busy, thriving and cheerful Scouting community others will want to join. Invite friends to join, with approval first, so your friends get a taste of what Scouting is about and what they CAN do.

Third, as we move forward into the world of 'Virtual Merit Badges', reflect on how platforms are used now and in the future. Youth Protection is extremely important as is protecting our Counselors as well. To keep all of our members safe please be sure to refresh yourselves regarding Youth Protection policies and follow them with all interactions.

With that in mind, we strongly suggest parents (and leaders) to please consider the following as a precaution for your Scout's safety and youth protection to prevent future contacts of one-on-one by allowing Scout(s) to use parent's email, parent's Facebook account and parent's phone numbers and etc. as they roam the virtual merit badges world. Remember while utilizing parents' accounts, parents should not do anything a Scout CAN do for themselves. Part of the merit badge program is achieved through learning new skills, overcoming obstacles, improving social skills, developing self-initiative and self-reliance.

Remember, this technology gives us the opportunity to come together as a Scouting Community, let's make the most of it!

Yours in Scouting,

Dick Hanaburgh
Camping and Program Director