



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA  
TROOP 23  
MOUNT PROSPECT

Our next outing will be a bike hike on October 24,25,26, 2002. Parents please check out your son's bike. Don't just ask him if his bike is OK, check it yourself with him. Maintenance items should include the following:

<b>TIRES</b>	Do they hold air? Check for cracks, cuts, & side wall dry rot.
<b>INFLATION</b>	Fill the tires to the maximum air pressure. They will ride with less resistance and roll easier.
<b>BRAKES</b>	Do they stop?
<b>WHEELS</b>	Are they round and true? Do they wobble? Do they rub?
<b>SPOKES</b>	Are they tight? Replace any broken ones.
<b>NUTS &amp; BOLTS</b>	Is everything tight?
<b>LUBRICATION</b>	Check oil & grease points for proper lubrication.
<b>GEARS</b>	Do they shift properly when needed?
<b>STEERING</b>	Is it stiff or does it turn freely?
<b>FIT</b>	Have you adjusted the fit to your son since he has grown? E.g., seat & handlebar height.

If you are not sure how to do the above properly, take the bike to a local bike shop for a tune-up. *Your son's comfort and safety are at stake here.* On every bike hike, we always have one or two bikes that have been severely neglected. At best this holds up the entire troop while we try to make trail side repairs and at worst puts him at risk of serious injury. We have had bikes arrive with flat tires, broken spokes, inoperative gears, rusted chains and no brakes. If the bike is not in good operating condition, he will also have a hard time keeping up with the rest of the scouts and become frustrated.

Once you are sure it is in good condition, check the fit. This means the seat should be set so that when he is sitting on the seat, with his foot on the "bottomed" pedal and hands on the handlebar, the knee should have a very slight bend in it. It is amazing how many people like to set the seat so low that they can sit on it while planting their feet flat on the ground. This is a sure way to get sore knees, cramps and exhausted legs. Once the seat is adjusted properly, set the handlebar height so that not too much weight is on the hands or butt. A lower handlebar setting puts more weight on the hands while higher puts more weight on the butt. Try for a happy medium.

A cycling helmet is required by the Guide to Safe Scouting. Buy one and wear it. IT IS REQUIRED FOR THIS ACTIVITY. Of more than 1000 cycling deaths each year, three-fourths are from head injuries. *Half of those deaths are school age children.* Studies have concluded that wearing a cycling helmet can reduce the risk of head injury by 85 percent. Helmets are not cheap (although costs are coming down), but consider what it's protecting.

We want to bring him home in good condition with good memories of the outing. As with all our outings, the condition and fit of his equipment plays a big part in the success.

Bob Heuser