

Semialachee Lodge Factsheet for Unit Leaders

The Order of the Arrow is Scouting's National Honor Society.

Purposes of the OA:

1. Recognize Scouts who best exemplify the Scout Oath and Law
2. Develop and maintain camping traditions and spirit
3. Promote Scout camping
4. Crystallize the Scout habit of helpfulness into a life of cheerfulness and service.
5. Support Council operations through service to camp and the Council.

History

The Order of the Arrow (OA) was founded by Dr. E. Urner Goodman and Carroll A. Edson in 1915 at the Treasure Island Camp of the Philadelphia Council, Boy Scouts of America. It became an official program experiment in 1922 and was approved as part of the Scouting program in 1934.

In 1948 the OA, recognized as the BSA's national brotherhood of honor campers, became an official part of the national camping program of the Boy Scouts of America.

Membership

The OA has more than 176,000 members located in lodges affiliated with approximately 327 BSA local councils.

Eligibility

Scouts are elected to the Order by their fellow unit members, following approval by the Scoutmaster or Varsity team Coach. To become a member, a youth must be a registered member of a Boy Scout troop or Varsity Scout team and hold First Class rank. The youth must have experienced fifteen days and nights of Boy Scout camping during the two-year period prior to the election. The fifteen days and nights must include one, but no more than one, long-term camp consisting of six consecutive days and five nights of resident camping, approved and under the auspices and standards of the Boy Scouts of America. The balance of the camping must be overnight, weekend, or other short-term camps.

Adult selection is based on their ability to perform the necessary functions to help the Order fulfill its purpose, and is not for recognition. Selected adult Scouters must be an asset to the Order because of demonstrated abilities, and provide a positive role model for the youth members of the lodge.

Induction

The induction ceremony, called the Ordeal, is the first step toward full membership. During the experience, candidates maintain silence, receive small amounts of food, work on camp improvement projects, and are required to sleep alone, apart from other campers. The entire experience is designed to teach significant values.

<http://www.oa-bsa.org/>

<http://www.semialachee.net/>

Brotherhood Membership

After 10 months of service and fulfilling certain requirements, a member may take part in the Brotherhood ceremony, which places further emphasis on the ideals of Scouting and the Order. Completion of this ceremony signifies full membership in the OA.

Vigil Honor

After two years of service as a Brotherhood member, and with the approval of the national Order of the Arrow Committee, a Scout may be recognized with the Vigil Honor for outstanding service to Scouting, his lodge, and the community. This honor is bestowed by special selection and is limited to one person for every 50 members registered with the lodge each year.

Lodges

Each local Boy Scout council is encouraged to have an Order of the Arrow lodge. Each lodge is granted a charter from the National Council, BSA, upon annual application. The OA lodge helps the local council provide a quality Scouting program through recognition of Scouting spirit and performance, development of youth leadership and service, promotion of Scout camping and outdoor programs, and enhancement of membership tenure.

Sections

An Order of the Arrow section consists of lodges within a geographic area of the region. Once every year, representatives of lodges in the section come together for a conclave to share in fellowship, skills, and training. A section is lead by three youth officers, the Section Chief, Section Vice-Chief, and Section Secretary, who are advised by an adult Section Adviser and professional Section Staff Adviser. Semialachee Lodge, along with seven other lodges from Florida and three from Georgia, is a member of Section Four.

All of the elected section chiefs are invited to the annual planning meeting held in Dallas, TX. The section chiefs form the conference committee for a national Order of the Arrow event, such as the National Order of the Arrow Conference, which is held under the guidance of the national Order of the Arrow Committee.

Region Leadership

The region chief is the youth leader of the region elected by the section chiefs in his region. This election is held in conjunction with called meetings of the section chiefs to elect the national chief and vice-chief, as well as to plan a national Order of the Arrow event.

The region Order of the Arrow chairman is an adult appointed by the region director. The professional adviser for the region is a staff member assigned to the position by the region director. All three of the OA region leaders serve as members of the national Order of the Arrow Committee.

National Leadership

The national chief and vice-chief are Arrowmen elected by the section chiefs during the annual national planning meeting. They serve as members of the national Order of the Arrow Committee, providing the opinion of youth on national OA policy. They also serve as the presiding officers for the national OA event. Their term of office is specified by the national committee, and is currently one year. They are advised in their responsibilities by the national committee chairman and national director of the Order of the Arrow.

The national OA committee chairman is appointed by the chairman of the national Boy Scout Committee. The professional adviser is the director of the Order of the Arrow, a member of the national Boy Scout Division staff.

Important Myths to be Dispelled:

1. The OA is not a secret organization. While the content of ceremonies is generally kept between members for the enjoyable mystical effect, NO information about ceremonies or all other lodge activities is withheld from parents and concerned troop leaders.
2. No ceremony, dance, or other activity conducted by the OA is meant to have any religious significance or adhere to any tribal tradition. The Native American aspect is used to enrich the ceremonies and traditions of brotherhood and cheerful service.
3. No part of any ceremony or lodge activity in the OA involves any unsafe practices, i.e. hazing, starvation, blindfolding, etc.

What the Members Do:

Youth members of the lodge conduct the business of the lodge and support the council in providing a quality camping program through service and leadership opportunities and training. Adults serve as advisers, who provide assistance where needed and assist the youth members in accomplishing their goals.

Major Lodge Activities:

1. Fellowships: Weekend events where lodge members gather, usually at Wallwood, to conduct service projects for the camp, enjoy meeting other Arrowmen from around the council and sometimes from other councils, and participate in training or fun programs planned by the various committees of the lodge.
2. Section Conference: A weekend event held annually at one of the camps within Section 4. Arrowmen from across the state gather for training, fellowship, and fun activities planned by the "host" lodge and the section's leadership.
3. Lodge Executive Committee Meetings: The lodge is run by a committee of youth members who meet monthly to conduct business and share what each committee or officer has been working for the past month. The lodge chief (sort of the CEO of the lodge) conducts this meeting. The meetings are generally held on the first Thursday of each month and last about an hour. ALL lodge members may attend, as well as

parents, although voting is restricted to elected lodge officials and certain committee chairmen (all youth members).

4. **National Programs:** The OA has several national high adventure programs associated with the three high-adventure bases, as well as national events of its own, such as the National Order of the Arrow Conference (NOAC).

The Lodge-Unit Relationship:

1. The OA provides training to make older Scouts into better leaders, and provides them with opportunities to manage tasks within the lodge.
2. The OA tasks itself with improving council camping facilities for the enjoyment of all units.
3. The OA promotes camping and high adventure through service to the council camp and opportunities at national high adventure bases.
4. The OA Troop Representative is the liaison between the unit and the lodge. The OA troop rep is encouraged to attend LEC meetings and keep an eye on the lodge newsletter and website to remind other lodge members in the unit about upcoming opportunities and events in the lodge. The OA Troop Representative is a member of the Patrol Leader's Council, and his office satisfies the service requirements for the Star, Life, and Eagle ranks.

Getting Involved with the Lodge:

The number one way to support the lodge and its mission is to get involved and more importantly encourage youth members to get involved. The national and lodge websites have more information; their addresses are below. Furthermore, make sure your troop has an active OA troop representative who is making contact with the Lodge Executive Committee often.