



PA-HIN LODGE

ORDER OF THE ARROW

Dear Unit Leader,

As we gear up for upcoming OA events and activities, it is important to ensure that our Order of the Arrow (OA) youth members are well-prepared and meet the necessary requirements for travel. The Order of the Arrow is a vital part of our Scouting community, and we want to guarantee a safe and enjoyable experience for all participants.

The OA runs similar, but different than a traditional unit being youth led from the chapter (district) level all the way to the national level. The youth however are not running amuck, they are advised by capable adults at every level.

The OA for the most part has two types of events, Chapter led and Lodge led. Chapters being the foundation of the OA much like the unit in traditional scouting, and the Lodge being at the council level. Chapter events are most likely monthly meetings and predefined place, that usually accompany some sort of activity at them. These meetings are led by the youth and have at minimum two adult leaders (per Youth Protection) at them. Chapters may also host Chapter Conclaves, most likely in the spring which is where many new candidates undergo their Ordeal process. These events are also led by the youth, with a heavy adult presence at them. The adults fill out all the roles from check-in and check-out to health/safety, and cook.

Lodge events typically comprise of fellowship events and other conclaves. Not all conclaves involved arduous labor at them. Some of them like Section Conclave are a gathering of many lodges throughout our section (G11). These events have sometimes hundreds of people at them spanning from youth to adults.

You may have noticed a difference in the OA programming. The OA counts “youth eligibility” until they turn 21. This only applies to youth activities such as officer positions, and program activities. This however ***does not*** change youth protection standards. All youth protection standards must be followed ***without exception***.

The Order of the Arrow program commonly becomes a very individual experience. In years past many youth have driven themselves to OA events. Due to changes in youth protection, youth (under the age of 18) ***should not*** be driving themselves to events. This creates a problem. How do we get youth to events? Units should be working with the OA members within their unit to aid in transportation to events. In 2013, the BSA announced the Troop OA Advisor position for Assistant Scoutmasters. The position in conjunction with the troops youth OA representative can help assist in finding car pool and transportation for other members of the troop.

The OA has many great opportunities for youth and adult members. The goal of all adult leaders in BSA programs is to keep our youth members safe. By following the youth protection standards, this can be achieved. A strong OA program equals a strong Scouting program.