



Abnaki Lodge, W.W.W.
Narragansett Council • Boy Scouts of America

Information for Unit Leaders

This booklet contains important information about Abnaki Lodge, W.W.W., Order of the Arrow. This information is for unit leaders about our purpose, programs, leadership, events, and procedures, including unit elections and camping promotions. Please keep this information close at hand with the rest of your Scouting documents, and refer to it whenever you have a question about Abnaki Lodge and the Order of the Arrow.

About the Order of the Arrow...

The Order of the Arrow is Scouting's National Honor Society. Its purposes are:

- To recognize those Scout campers who best exemplify the Scout Oath and Law in their daily lives
- To develop and maintain camping traditions and spirit
- To promote Scout camping
- To crystallize the Scout habit of helpfulness into a life purpose of leadership in cheerful service to others

The Order seeks to develop the principles of Brotherhood, Cheerfulness, and Service in young men. We feel that a good Scout should not only be a skilled camper, but should also seek to do cheerful service, in the tradition of our Scout Slogan – Do a “Good Turn” daily.

The Order of the Arrow is a program that exists within the Boy Scouts of America, not separate from it. Members of your troop who are in the Order of the Arrow are still members of your troop, and are Boy Scouts just like you are. While they have been selected to the Order as an honor, their membership in the Order also teaches them that they need to continue to give cheerful service. Membership is not given only for what you have done, but for what you will do in the future. The Order has its own program of service and activities, but these don't replace what your troop does.

How one joins the Order of the Arrow...

Scouts and Scouters do not join the Order of the Arrow, they are elected through an annual unit election. Once each year, a representative from the Order of the Arrow Lodge can visit your troop meeting and conduct an election, whereby members of your troop, under the age of twenty-one, can elect their peers to membership in the Order of the Arrow. Once elected, the candidate for membership must attend what is called an Ordeal, which is the induction experience for the Order of the Arrow. This is a weekend where they have a chance to prove their courage and self-reliance; pay attention to inner thoughts; serve their fellow man cheerfully; and prove their ability to live the Scout Oath and Law. The weekend will test not only their physical strength, but their inner strength as well.

The troop committee may nominate an adult for membership in the Order of the Arrow in accordance with the following. Once a unit election has been conducted and at least one youth member has been elected, the committee may nominate (not elect) one adult for membership. If approved by the lodge adult selection committee, the adult candidate must also complete the Ordeal just as a youth member does.

Adults who were members of the OA as a youth or as an adult, in this council or in another council, who wish to 're-join' the OA may do so by completing an adult transfer form and paying the current year's dues. Forms are available from the Lodge Web Site: www.abnakilodge.org. Adults should not wear the lodge flap of the lodge they were a member of as a youth. BSA policy states that you wear the current lodge flap of the lodge that is a part of the council that you are currently registered with and in which you are a member in good standing.

On mystery and the Order of the Arrow...

There is no such thing as a “secret society” in the Boy Scouts of America. The local council supervises all of the Order’s activities, and all BSA rules and regulations, including those of youth protection, are strictly enforced. The adult advisors to the leadership of the local lodge and/or chapters of the Order of the Arrow is approved annually by the council’s Scout Executive, and a professional member of the council staff acts as an associate adviser to the lodge. Everything in the OA is conducted according to the Scout Oath and Law, and the primary concern of all OA functions, especially the Ordeal, is the health and well being of the individual. No hazing, abuse, or otherwise unsafe or unScoutlike activities take place at any OA function. All of our ceremonies and activities are regularly reviewed and approved by Boy Scouts of America leaders as well as the leaders of most faiths, churches, and religions.

The induction process of the Order is shrouded in mystery. We closely safeguard our ceremonies and traditions. This does not mean that a member cannot talk to his parents about what happens. In fact, we encourage it, because it helps both the Scout and his parents to gain a better understanding of Scouting. We do, however, ask that members not discuss aspects of OA ceremonies or inductions with nonmember Scouts who might become members themselves one day. The ideals of the Order are best taught by guided discovery through the Ordeal; knowing what to expect beforehand ruins the experience for candidates.

Parents or unit leaders who have concerns about the Order are encouraged to seek out the Lodge Advisor. Questions and concerns may be resolved by speaking with the Lodge Adviser, Staff Adviser, and Scout Executive; by reading and reviewing Order of the Arrow documents and materials; and as a last resort, obtaining permission to attend / view an Order of the Arrow induction prior to the one one’s son would attend, with the understanding that they cannot disturb or interfere with the induction.

On youth leadership and adult advisors...

Abnaki Lodge, W.W.W., is the lodge chartered to Narragansett Council. We are a ‘youth-run’ lodge. This means that all the voting members of the Lodge and its Executive Committee are youth. Every decision about the lodge, its weekends, etc., are handled by youth. Each year, the youth in the lodge elect their own leaders, who are responsible for planning the lodge calendar, handling funding for the lodge program, and running all lodge events. The top youth officer in the lodge is the Lodge Chief, a secretary, a treasurer, a Chapter Chief for each district in the council, and a number of operating committee chairmen. Being a youth officer in the lodge builds upon the leadership experiences a Scout has learned in his troop, and with its greater demands and level of responsibility, helps young men grow further in their leadership skills.

All adults in the Lodge need to understand and work within this framework. There are a number of official Advisers to the lodge, including the Lodge Adviser, who is appointed annually by the Scout Executive to guide the lodge, and a Chapter Advisor for each chapter, who are appointed by the Lodge Advisor with the approval of the Scout Executive. Other adults are asked to assist by advising specific committees or functions. All adult members of the OA serve as “advisers” to the youth in their unit, and are responsible for encouraging their participation in OA events and

helping to provide opportunities for transportation to OA functions. As adults, we need to realize that sometimes youth will make mistakes, and sometimes it's best to let them make them, so that they can learn from them. Adults in the lodge need to be patient and tolerant with the youth as they learn to be leaders.

What does the OA do? What can the OA do for me?

The primary purpose of the Order is to help an individual better live the Scout Oath and Law in their daily lives. The young men of your unit who are members of the OA should be better Scouts because of the things they learn and do in the OA. It is proven that participation in the Order helps young men stay in Scouting longer and participate more; the old adage that the OA "steals young men away from troops" is a misconception.

There is a new position in the troop called the OA Troop Representative. This is an SPL-appointed youth position in the troop, which counts for the leadership requirement for rank advancement. The Scout who holds this role in the troop promotes OA activities, serves as a liaison between the troop and the lodge; and arranges for OA visits for unit elections and camping promotion visits.

The Order of the Arrow is heavily involved in camp and camping. OA members do most of the service done at our council camps during service weekends. OA members are also available to visit your troop meeting and promote summer camp. Lastly, if there is a camping skill or other camping-related help you need, you can contact the OA lodge to provide resources, training, and support for your unit's camping program.

The Order of the Arrow is one more resource a Scoutmaster can use to encourage youth retention and activity and help his troop's camping program. We are here to help your unit and your boys.

When does the OA conduct these Ordeals? When are meetings held?

The lodge schedules ordeals at various times and council camps during the year so as to allow the newly elected candidate to have some flexibility when deciding when to complete his ordeal and become a member of the Lodge. The schedule is published annually on the lodge website at www.abnakilodge.org. There are usually one or two ordeals scheduled in the springtime, prior to the annual camping season, and again in the fall, after the annual camping season has concluded. Check the website for the current schedule and locations.

Chapter meetings are held in conjunction with the District Roundtables each month starting in the month of September through the month of May. Check the council calendar on the council website at www.narragansettbsa.org for the times and locations of the district roundtables.

The Lodge Executive Board meets on the fourth Monday of each month during the months of September through June. The location of the E-Board meetings can be found on the Lodge website at www.abnakilodge.org. Members who wish to may attend these meetings. Check the Lodge website for the location, as meetings are generally alternated so as to accommodate the membership of the various chapters due to the distances traveled. Each member is encouraged to

become active in the business of the lodge and chapter and volunteer to join one of the committees.

Lodge Executive Board meetings are where the youth officers and adult advisers plan the lodge program. Any member is welcome to attend as a silent observer. Members wishing to have an item discussed should notify the Lodge Chief (if a youth) or Lodge Adviser (if adult) fourteen days prior to the meeting.

Order of the Arrow Elections

Once each year (calendar year or "Scouting" year), a chartered Boy Scout Troop may request that a unit election be held to elect members of their troop to become candidates for membership in the Order of the Arrow. Both youth and adult Scouts and Scouters can become members of the OA. Candidates are elected by the entire youth (under the age of twenty-one years) membership of the troop, not only by the OA members in your troop. Everyone under the age of twenty-one years who is registered in the troop may vote (thereby insuring that Scouts are elected mostly by people who are not OA members). If your troop has no active OA members, that's fine. Unit elections are conducted by a unit election team, trained in the latest OA election policies. At the request of the Senior Patrol Leader or Team Leader, they will visit a regular unit meeting at your invitation to conduct the election for you.

Youth elections are normally held at a normal troop meeting, and take about 20 minutes to complete. In order for an election to be held, at least 50% of your youth members (under the age of twenty-one years) must be present (based on your current chartered troop membership) – if less than 50% are present, the election must be rescheduled. **Only elections conducted by an official OA election team trained by Abnaki Lodge will be considered valid. Members of your own troop cannot conduct an election for your troop.** However, members of the OA who are members of your unit may be asked by the election team to assist. However, they may not be involved in the tallying of ballots.

The requirements for election for youth members are as follows (in the OA, a 'youth' is anyone under the age of 21; this differs from the BSA 'youth' which ends at the age of 18):

- 1) Must be under 21 years old at the time of election.
- 2) Hold at least the First Class Scout rank (this includes Assistant Scoutmasters over the age of 18 but under the age of 21; they have to have earned First Class before their 18th birthday).
- 3) In the past two years, have completed fifteen (15) days and nights of camping under the auspices of the Boy Scouts of America. The fifteen days and nights of camping must include one long-term camp of six days and five nights, and the balance of the camping must be short-term (1, 2, or 3 night) campouts.
- 4) Have these requirements certified by the Scoutmaster, and be given a general endorsement of the candidate's Scout Spirit by the Scoutmaster, BEFORE the election is conducted.

How to schedule a Unit Election / How the election is conducted for youth

- 1) The Patrol Leader's Council selects several appropriate dates on which the OA election may be conducted. Dates should be selected far enough in advance to allow the election team to

schedule the election. Elections are best held during a regular troop meeting, at a time where as close to 100% of the troop as possible can attend. It is suggested that several dates be chosen, as the election teams may not be able to fulfill one or two dates. Elections are scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis by the chapter's Unit Election Team.

- 2) The SPL or SM submits, in writing, a request to the Chapter Advisor for your district (contact information and the proper form is available on the lodge website at www.abnakilodge.org). Unit elections are scheduled through the Chapter Advisor, in consultation with the Unit Election Team Advisers and Unit Election Team members. The Chapter Advisor will personally supervise the election, or send a trained and authorized Unit Election Team Adviser in his place. The SPL or SM should be prepared to give clear driving directions, meeting time and location, and what time they would like the election team to be there. The election team typically arrives 10 minutes before the election to set up and start the necessary procedures.
- 3) The Scoutmaster must prepare a list of eligible candidates for election based on the requirements above. Prior to the election, the Scoutmaster should notify and counsel those Scouts who he/she is not recommending for election. If possible, the Scoutmaster or Senior Patrol Leader may prepare pre-printed ballots with all the names of the eligible candidates. If not, the election team will have blank ballots with them.
- 4) About a week before the election, a representative of the Unit Election Team will contact the Scoutmaster to verify the election, location, time, etc. Any questions or concerns should be resolved at this point.
- 5) The election team should arrive prior to the scheduled election time. They will ask for verification of the number of Scouts registered in the troop; the number of Scouts present at the meeting; and the names and ranks of all Scouts who are deemed eligible by the Scoutmaster. The Scoutmaster will certify this information on the election form.
- 6) The election team then conducts the unit OA election. The names of the candidates are presented, and the election team explains the criteria for voting. Voting for candidates is done by secret ballot, and **no interference or public revelation of an individual's votes or the votes in total is tolerated**. All youth, including Assistant Scoutmasters under the age of 21, may vote. Candidates may vote for themselves if they think that they are worthy.
- 7) Candidates voting have three options.
 - a) They cannot turn in a ballot, which is abstaining. This does not affect the final result, which is based on the total number of votes cast.
 - b) They can turn in a blank ballot, which is a vote for nobody. This counts against all candidates.
 - c) They can vote for any number, including all, of the candidates eligible. This helps those who they vote for, and hurts those who they don't vote for.
- 8) Ballots are collected by the team and counted in private. In order to be elected, a candidate has to receive 50% of the ballots COLLECTED (abstentions don't count against the final, but blank ballots do). The election team indicates which Scouts have been elected, and destroys the ballots (preferably off-site). If no one Scout has enough votes to be elected, the election team re-runs the election, with further explanations of the OA and offering to answer questions. If the result of the second ballot is that again no one is elected, that counts as the election for this year and no further balloting is permitted. As long as one youth is elected, the election is valid.
- 9) The Scoutmaster will be informed of the results of the election only to the extent as to which Scouts were elected. **The election team is prohibited from giving anyone in the unit the actual vote counts**. It is the Scoutmaster's choice as to when the results are made known,

immediately or at another time in the troop setting. **Note, however, that a candidate has one (1) year in which he may complete the Ordeal, which completes his membership into the OA. It is the sole responsibility of the candidate to learn the dates of ordeals and to properly register for the ordeal of his choice.** As noted previously, ordeal dates are posted on the Lodge website, www.abnakilodge.org, and candidates may register on-line through the site.

- 10) Completing the Ordeal, a weekend-long experience that tests a Scout's dedication to the Scout Oath and Law, is the final step for membership in the Order of the Arrow. Abnaki Lodge, W.W.W., has several Ordeals a year, in the spring, and in the fall, so the candidate generally has several opportunities to complete the Ordeal. Please do not hold off on notifying a candidate unnecessarily so that he misses a chance to be inducted. Exceptions to the one-year rule may only be granted by the Lodge Adviser. If a Scout does not complete the Ordeal within one year and an exception is not granted, they would need to be re-elected by the members of the troop.

How to nominate an adult for membership in the Order of the Arrow

As long as the unit successfully elects at least one youth member to the Order, the unit committee may then nominate (**not elect**) an adult for membership. Where youth membership is given by his peers as a recognition for service, adults are nominated and accepted if their membership will enrich the Order of the Arrow experience for the youth, or provide some service to the Lodge, the Camp, or the Council. Adult membership should not be given solely as a recognition or honor.

The requirements for election for adult members (in the OA, an 'adult' is anyone 21 years of age or older; this differs from the BSA 'adult' which starts at the age of 18) are as follows:

- 1) Must be a registered and active member of the Narragansett Council of the Boy Scouts of America at the time of nomination.
- 2) Must be at least 21 years old at the time of nomination. Both males and females are eligible.
- 3) In the past two years, have completed fifteen (15) days and nights of camping under the auspices of the Boy Scouts of America. The fifteen days and nights of camping must include one long-term camp of six days and five nights, and the balance of the camping must be short-term (1, 2, or 3 night) campouts.

A separate Adult Nomination Form exists for adult Scouters. This form is available in the unit election package or on-line at the lodge website at www.abnakilodge.org. At the end of a successful election for youth, the Election Team can provide the Troop Committee Chairman an adult nomination form. The nomination form is completed in full and mailed to the Lodge, care of the Council Administrative Office. The Adult Selection Committee (consisting of the Lodge Adviser, Lodge Staff Adviser, and Council Camping Committee Chairman, will review the form and make a decision on the adult's nomination. Please remember that a nomination does not ensure approval. If approved, the troop will be notified so that they can decide how they will inform the candidate. Adult candidates need to complete the Ordeal within one year from the date of approval by the Adult Selection Committee, similar to that of a youth member.

To Schedule a Unit Election...

Unit elections are normally held from January 2 through May 31. Elections are not held during Summer Camp. Your Chapter Advisor may grant exceptions, if the conditions warrant. To schedule a unit election, the unit's SPL should submit a written Unit Election Request form, available on the lodge website, or contact your appropriate Chapter Advisor. Contact information and Unit Election Request forms are available on the lodge website at www.abnakilodge.org. Any questions about elections, procedures, results, the Ordeal, or any other concern about the Order of the Arrow can be directed to the Lodge Adviser.

Order of the Arrow Troop Representative Program

"Let it be remembered that the Order of the Arrow was created to help the unit - to help it present its membership a better ideal of the inner qualities of the good scout camper. Qualities of character, like cheerfulness and service, are hard for a boy or a man to understand in the abstract. They come easier when seen in human life. Let us realize the significance of the Order in the unit - for the unit is our best hope in Scouting."

- Dr. E. Urner Goodman, Founder of the Order of the Arrow

The Order of the Arrow Troop / Team Representative program was begun in 1999 as a program to better serve the troops and teams of the Boy Scouts of America. This program is designed to improve relationships and communications between individual units and the local Order of the Arrow lodge, and to help make units aware of what an important resource that the Lodge can be for unit programs.

The Order of the Arrow Troop / Team Representative is a youth liaison serving between the local OA lodge and his unit. In his unit, he will serve as a link between unit and lodge in a way that strengthens both organizations. By setting a good example, he will enhance the function and image of the Order as a service arm to his unit.

The OA Representative is now an official leadership position within the troop or team, and boys can earn time towards their leadership rank requirements for Star, Life, and Eagle. Insignia is now available for OA Representatives to wear as a badge of office

Abnaki Lodge is excited about using this program in Narragansett Council. The lodge leadership has the task of aiding the troops and teams of Narragansett Council in organizing and implementing this program within their units. Please read through this information and prepare your youth leaders to select their Troop representative. When you return the registration form to us, Abnaki Lodge will send an acknowledgement and one set of the insignia for your OA Troop Representative.

OA Troop/Team Representative Frequently Asked Questions:

What is the OA Troop/Team Representative?

The Troop / Team Representative program was begun in 1999 as a program of the Order of the Arrow and the Boy Scouts of America. The OA Representative is now an official leadership position in the troop or team and boys can earn time towards their leadership requirements for rank advancement, just as with Den Chief, Troop Scribe, or any of the other leadership positions.

What are the responsibilities of the Troop/Team Representative?

There are numerous possibilities for the job description of the OA Representative. The beauty is that it is flexible enough to allow your unit to fine-tune the exact responsibilities. However, the most basic tasks of the Representative will be to coordinate service opportunities within the unit, to coordinate unit involvement with the Order of the Arrow, including Unit Elections, Camp Promotions, and Inductions, and request lodge and chapter resources to help meet unit needs.

How can I get the badge of office for my Troop/Team Representative?

Abnaki Lodge, W.W.W, has purchased a patch for each unit. After you've completed and returned the registration form enclosed with this packet we will send you a patch.

How can 18 to 20 Year-olds be involved?

Youth Arrowmen who are 18 or older can serve as a lodge or chapter chair or as a liaison for the Order of the Arrow Troop/Team Representative program. They can play a critical role in the Lodge Structure for the program.

Who can serve as a Troop/Team Representative?

Anyone in the unit who is under the age of 18 can serve as the OA Representative for the unit, provided he is a dues-paid member of the Order of the Arrow. He should be appointed by the Senior Patrol Leader or Varsity Team Captain, and will be a member of the Patrol Leaders' Council and attend lodge and chapter meetings. The Representative should be appointed each year following the election of the youth leadership of the unit.

Will there be an adviser for the Troop/Team Representative?

As with all positions in the Order, the OA Representative should have an adult as his adviser. This adult needs to be 21 years of age or older, a dues-paid member of the Order of the Arrow, and be appointed by the Scoutmaster.

Does this position count for rank advancement?

Scouts may use the Order of the Arrow Troop / Team Representative position to meet the leadership position requirements for the Star, Life, and Eagle ranks. As BSA publications are revised and updated, they will include this new position.

OA Troop Representative Duties:

- Serves as a communication link between the lodge or chapter and the troop.
- Encourages year round and resident camping in the troop.
- Encourages older Scout participation in high adventure programs.
- Encourages Scouts to actively participate in community service projects.
- Assists with leadership skills training in the troop.
- Encourages Arrowmen to assume leadership positions in the troop.
- Encourages Arrowmen in the troop to be active participants in the lodge activities and to seal their membership in the Order by becoming Brotherhood members.
- Sets a good example
- Enthusiastically wears the Scout uniform correctly.
- Lives by the Scout Oath, Scout Law and OA Obligation.

- Shows Scout spirit.

Who Benefits from the OA Troop/Team Representative Program?

Lodge:

- With an easier camp promotions process, the lodge can increase the number of units visited, increasing the effectiveness of this program in the Council.
- Eases the unit election process by having a person in the troop or team whose job is to ensure that elections are held.
- With positive OA leadership on the unit level, lodges will experience greater membership retention and higher Brotherhood conversion rates.
- A Unit's OA members will have someone to organize transportation to OA events, increasing attendance at lodge functions.
- With the Troop/Team Representative as a liaison between the Order of the Arrow and the troop or team, the camp promotions process will be smoother, leading to greater numbers of Scouts at summer camp.

Troop and Team:

- The coordination of OA calendar with that of troop and team will prevent OA members from having to choose between OA functions and unit events.
- With the organization of service projects, there will be greater opportunity for community service hours that are required for rank advancement.
- Experienced Arrowmen from other units who may be able to share their knowledge can be sought out by the OA Representatives to augment the troop program.
- Creates more opportunities for leadership in the troop or team for both youth and adults, effectively increasing membership retention.
- Creates a vehicle to strengthen the ties between the OA and the individual BSA troop or team. This will help with the retention of the older Scouts.

