OPERATIONS
UPDATE

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OA Membership Verification

The national Order of the Arrow committee is pleased to announce the availability of a new ScoutNET process to verify the BSA registration of OA lodge members. Sponsored by the Order of the Arrow, this new capability has been distributed to all councils in the February 2005 ScoutNET production release.

In 2004, the national Order of the Arrow committee conducted a survey of OA lodge membership systems. The purpose of the survey was to determine what was being used by lodges to keep track of their membership, manage inductions, do mailings, track finances and property, and verify the BSA membership of lodge members.

In addition to the wealth of information collected, the survey revealed that everyone needed help checking the BSA registration of OA members. Each year the Scout executive is asked to sign the OA charter renewal application. In doing this he is attesting to a statement that all lodge members are BSA members and that the OA membership has been checked against the council membership files. According to the survey, checking the BSA registration of lodge members is a laborious, manual process. As a result, it is not being done with any degree of regularity. Therefore, the annual certification the Scout executive is being asked to sign is not being done with good information. This is a youth protection issue and may have a detrimental effect on BSA membership totals.

To initiate the new verification process, the lodge membership person must create a comma-delimited file (named **oaupload.csv**) containing one record for each dues-paid OA member that is to be checked. Each record will contain the following data elements in the order shown:

Data Element	Maximum Length & Type
BSA PERSON-ID	15N (with no leading zeroes)
LODGE RECORD-ID	6N (lodge unique ID, if available)
FIRST-NAME	35A
MIDDLE-NAME	35A
LAST-NAME	35A
SUFFIX	6A/N
DATE-OF-BIRTH	8 or 10A/N (formatted mmddyyyy or mm/dd/yyyy)
GENDER	1A (either M or F)

Present the disk file along with the record count to the lodge staff adviser who will direct it to the appropriate council staff person to initiate the process. Each record will be compared to the council BSA membership records of current paid registrants in traditional units and in non-unit positions using BSA PERSON-ID, LAST NAME, DATE-OF-BIRTH, and GENDER. Based on the BSA membership status determined, a return code will be added to each record (1 = Registered, 2 = Not Registered, or 3 = Not Matched).

If a person is registered on a regional or national board and is not registered in the local council, they will be returned as "Not Matched". These registrations are maintained outside the local council data in ScoutNET. Their registrations must be verified manually.

The process will return three record sets to the local council. Each record set will contain the same records (in the same sort order submitted) except the records will be tab-delimited and the return codes will have been added. The council can output each record set in hard or soft copy to return to the lodge membership person for further processing in their lodge membership system.

At this point, action should be taken to renew the BSA registration of everyone who shows up as "Not Registered". Those that appear as "Not Matched" must be researched. A data entry discrepancy most likely exists in ScoutNET or in the lodge membership records that is causing a mismatch in one or more of the comparison data elements. Once corrected and rerun, the record will move into the "Registered" or "Not Registered" categories. There will be a lot of "Not Matched" when the process is first run, but these will diminish as corrections are made. OA members that are not registered members of the BSA and dues-paid members of the lodge are not "members in good standing" and are not eligible for further participation in Order of the Arrow functions.

Most lodges do not presently have the BSA PERSON-ID data element in their membership systems. It will need to be added to each lodge member's record. The ID's appear on the BSA membership cards and are also available in the council ScoutNET database. Capturing the ID's as a normal part of the induction sequence (Election, Ordeal, or Brotherhood) is a good collection point going forward. Dues payments and membership data verifications are other good times.

This process should be run several times during a calendar year. Councils renew unit charters at different times during the year in order to balance registration workloads. Under these circumstances the registration status of OA members will change at various times throughout the year.

OA LodgeMaster

The survey of lodge membership systems also documented the huge investments that lodges have made in tools to manage their membership functions. In addition, the survey revealed that a number of lodges were doing things manually and others would like to replace or upgrade their existing systems.

Over the next eighteen months the national Order of the Arrow committee is developing an integrated membership management system, called OA LodgeMaster, to support lodge operations. Presently, it is scheduled for rollout at NOAC 2006. OA LodgeMaster will be optional for lodges to use, but hopefully it will have sufficient capabilities that lodges will want to try it. It will be a system that will be maintained, enhanced and supported in the years to come, reducing the need to duplicate development/maintenance efforts. The latest progress can be followed by going to: www.oalodgemaster.org.