

LAMP LIGHTER

ILLUMINATING THE PATH OF THE INDUCTION



FAQ answering many common questions about the new inductions process

Making positive change

An op-ed by Stu Smith, Former Totanhan Nakaha Lodge Adviser

I became a member of the Order of the Arrow **40 years ago, and it has been my favorite part of Scouting ever since.** The OA has become the window through which I have seen all the best of Scouting - servant leadership and a welcoming place for all. When my kids joined Scouting, and then the OA, I was excited to experience the process again through their eyes. It was here when one of them asked about the Ordeal: Dad, if the OA is such a great place for Scouts, why is the joining process so isolating and not like the rest of the Scouting program. I had never really thought about it like that, and I realized then that this is part of the struggle we were having in membership activation and retention - **if as a new member, they do not feel welcome and do not make new friends outside of their unit, why would they come back?**

Fast forward to last year when I went back to Philmont for the National Council of Chiefs as one of the lodge advisers from our Section. I wanted to get all I could from this experience to bring home, and so **I went in with ears and eyes open.** Before we went out to experience the 'unveiling' of the new ceremony, we watched the video of the recreation of the first ceremony. Here I saw again the original idea - recognizing those Scouts who thought first of others. No Ordeal, no service, just recognition. This was the intent: After experiencing the new ceremonies and trying out a few of the activities, it was clear that this new process was driving different outcomes. The most memorable part was watching



the 30 members who had just done the whole experience celebrate the occasion together. The **air was electric, and the energy was palpable.** They had all made new friends, had fun doing service together and would be bringing

(Continued on page 2)

What's in a cape? An overview of their design.

The capes are standardized costume elements worn by the voices of the Order of the Arrow in the new induction. There are three different voices each with their own unique cape, representing one of the three values of the OA: brotherhood, cheerfulness, and service. Each lodge is encouraged to adorn the capes with approved patches from their lodge or council.

Capes should continue to be adorned with new patches that tell the continuing story of Scouting and the OA lodge.

But why Capes? The ceremonies to induct new members are universal regardless of their location. Historically, the clothing used for these ceremonies varied

between lodges, and in some lodges was representative of the clothing worn by Native Americans in that area. That variation resulted in new members experiencing different visual representations of our ceremony principals depending on where the member was inducted.

In the new induction the Voices of the OA wear the same capes, regardless of where the lodge is located, ensuring new members have a consistent induction experience. Lodges are encouraged to adorn the capes with patches that tell the history of Scouting and the lodge within the community.

The capes are an opportunity to celebrate the history of your lodge and council. For lodges that have, or may, merge, the cape is an opportunity to honor the legacy of the former lodges while celebrating the future.



"Making Positive Change" (Continued from page 2)

that energy back to their lodges. Truly we had found a way to go back to our roots of Brotherhood, Cheerfulness, and Service, and meet our purposes of recognition, teaching servant leadership and get older Scouts re-excited with the Scouting program.

Now how could we bring this back to our lodge to help us reinvigorate our program? We started by sharing what we experienced and how this would both encourage and re-invigorate new and current members. After all,

did we all not take leadership roles to serve our chapter and lodge because of what we had experienced in and/or hoped the OA would be? Have we not been struggling for the past 20 years to grow our lodge? By bringing the energy of the Scouts and the outcomes we saw from Philmont back to our LEC, we agreed to do all we could to bring this new program to our lodge. We started first by becoming one of the pilot lodges, and after having members participate in this process, carefully selecting a cross-section of 'brand new' members to 'well-experienced' youth and adults, **we saw first-hand we were on track. It wasn't perfect, but we saw overwhelming responses from same-day Q&A to follow-up surveys.** This new induction process and ceremonies created fellowship and friendships immediately that

often took multiple events and months to happen. From there, we partnered with the national induction team to improve and learn from each part of the roll-out, and now we have inducted nearly 200 new members through this.

Even though we have only hosted three new induction events, we are experiencing outcomes that are already improving our lodge. **Our luminary engagement has created a core of youth leaders that are excited to lead our chapters and lodge forward.** We are engaging new members in these first few weekends to get excited and sign up for future events from section conclave to NOAC. We have chapters that are filling their ranks and not only finding one leader, but also committees of leaders looking to fill all of the roles from communications to service. This momentum has also rolled into our adult ranks, and we are seeing both new and 'seasoned' volunteers raise their hands

and step-up to engage in supporting this new process. **They are excited to see the youth excited, and they cannot help themselves in getting more involved.**

This has truly been a journey for us this past year, and we are still working through a lot of little things to improve our member experience. We are looking ahead to have more of our current members go through this for themselves, and make sure we stay on-point to fulfill our mission: To achieve the mission of Scouting America through transformative fellowship that ignites limitless Scouting journeys. In the end though, I know we are headed in the right direction when one of the newest members said this afterwards: This is the best experience I've ever had in Scouting, and I cannot wait to see what else I can do in the OA. **I cannot think of a better way to fulfill our vision:** be the reason Scouts want to stay in Scouting.



By the numbers: current induction events

1727

Arrowmen have experienced the new induction (as of 8/23/26).

23

Section Induction Experience events have been **completed**.

15

Lodge Induction Experience events have been **completed**.

4

Lodges have **offered** the new Induction Experience to **new members**.



OA Scouting