

## Order of the Arrow Elections

Once each year (calendar year or “Scouting” year), a chartered Boy Scout Troop may hold a unit election to elect members of their troop to become members of the Order of the Arrow. Both youth and adult Scouts and Scouters can become members of the OA. New members aren’t elected only by the OA members in your troop; everyone in the troop votes (thereby insuring that Scouts are elected mostly by people who are not OA members). If you troop has no active OA members, that’s fine. A unit election team, trained in the latest OA election policies, will visit a regular troop meeting at your invitation to conduct the election for you.

Youth elections 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 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 Grand Monadnock Lodge will be considered valid. Members of your own troop cannot conduct an election for your troop.**

The requirements for election for youth members (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) are as follows:

- 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 18<sup>th</sup> 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) camps.
- 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 picks a date for the OA election. Dates should be picked 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.
- 2) The SM or SPL contacts the Lodge Vice-Chief for your district (contact information listed below). The election is scheduled through the Vice-Chief, who will personally conduct the election, or send a trained and authorized representative in his place. The SM or SPL 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 procedure.
- 3) The Scoutmaster prepares 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 is not recommending for election. If possible, the Scoutmaster or Senior Patrol Leader could prepare preprinted 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, the 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 arrives before the election is held. They will ask for 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 certifies this information on the election form.
- 6) The election team 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.
  - 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 notes 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. As long as one youth is elected, the election is valid.
- 9) The Scoutmaster is told the results of the election. It is his choice as to when the results are made known; immediately or at another time in the troop setting, or he can wait until the next available Order of the Arrow Call-out Ceremony. Note, however, that a candidate has one (1) year in which he may complete the Ordeal, which completes his membership into the OA.
- 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. Grand Monadnock Lodge #309 has two Ordeals a year, one in the spring and one in the fall, so the candidate generally has two 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 be granted by the Lodge for extenuating circumstances. If a Scout does not complete the Ordeal within one year and an exception is not granted, they would need to be re-elected.

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

As long as the unit successfully elects one youth member to the Order, the troop then may also 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 Nashua Valley 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) camps.

A separate Adult Nomination Form exists for adult Scouters. At the end of a successful election for youth, the Election Team will give the Troop Committee Chairman an adult nomination form. The nomination form is completed in full and mailed to the Lodge, care of the Council Service Center. The Adult Selection Committee (consisting of the Lodge Adviser, Lodge Staff Adviser, and Camping Committee Chairman, will review the form and make a decision on the adult's nomination. Please remember that 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, same as a youth member.

To Schedule a Unit Election...

Unit elections are normally held from January 1 through May 31. Elections are not held during Summer Camp. Your District Vice-Chief may grant other exceptions. To schedule a unit election, please contact your appropriate vice-chief:

Massasoit District Vice-Chief:

Aaron Stockwell  
(978) 486-9051  
massasoit@gml309.org

Wachusett District Vice-Chief:

Stephen Jahl  
(978) 939-2691  
wachusett@gml309.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.