

MARCH – ADOPTING THE NEW CUB SCOUT PROGRAM

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PAT: Hello, Everyone. We're so glad you've tuned into the March CubCast. We here at CubCast know that you know the secret to a successful Cub Scout year lies with the program planning calendar.

AARON: The new Adventures in Cub Scouting program begins in June, and lots of you have been asking us to do an episode on how to transition into the new program.

PAT: I just saw one of the volunteer extraordinaire who's worked on the program updates. I bet we can get him to guide us through the new adventures.

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PAT: Ken King is a Scouter from the Three Fires Council in St. Charles, Illinois. He is a committee member for his son's Boy Scout troop and the associate advisor for administration for the Central Region's Venturing program. Ken also serves as a task force member on a number of BSA program training and curriculum development task forces including the Cub Adventure team, the task force that conceived and designed the new Cub Scout program materials that will be released in May. Welcome to CubCast, Ken.

KEN: Hi there. Thanks very much.

PAT: So, Ken, what should Cubmasters and den leaders be doing to get ready for the new Cub Scout program?

KEN: The first thing they should be doing if they're a den leader is between now and June there's a series of roundtable meetings and new content's been developed for those to help them get ready to use the new program. Most important of all, on May 1st when the new materials come out, pick up a copy of the youth handbook that you'll be working with and the den leader guide that you'll need and spend some time reviewing because the den leader guide will map out how to deliver a den meeting in great detail.

We hope that the pack committee leadership would encourage and promote that really important planning meeting. We encourage the pack committee to make sure that den leaders have the materials on-hand to deliver these meetings and encourage roundtable attendance so they can stay up-to-date on what's happening during the transition between now and June 1st.

The cost associated with the new program won't be appreciably different. The number of adventure loops required is approximately the same as the number of academic and sports loops that are earned by boys right now. And the fact that a number of materials are being retired, like the progress toward ranks devices and the Webelos Compass Point Award. When those things are retired the difference in cost between the current program and the new program won't be appreciably different and some calculations suggest it will be a little bit less than what it is right now. So we're happy about that outcome.

PAT: Scouting families will be happy to hear that also because they are aware of costs and are happy any time that you can help keep those costs in line.

AARON: Speaking of that new program, Ken, what specifically do den leaders need to know about that program?

KEN: When they look at it from the boys' point of view, which is really important, they're going to see that the program's more active for boys that will make sure the boys are really connected with Scouting and with fun things and that the new system has an immediate recognition part that has a really high value as perceived by boys and it's easy to award and for boys to wear. For den leaders, the most important thing for them is that the new guides are incredibly detailed. Den meetings are mapped out and are designed to make sure it's a real high quality experience. Something den leaders also need to know - and this is watching out for their pocketbook - is that they don't need to buy additional resources but things like the Group Meeting Sparklers, the Cub Scout Songbook, (and) the How-to Book of Cub Scouting. They're all still available as extra resource materials, but everything is contained in one single den leader guide.

PAT: So, Ken, from the Voice of the Scout survey, we know that pack meetings are a major point for both parents and leaders. So, how does this new program affect the pack meetings and how can the pack committee prepare for that?

KEN: One thing that they need to be aware of is that the overall structure of pack meetings will still look very much the same so they'll be familiar with

it. They've had experience with pack meetings but, some things we've developed to help them be more successful is we have a team that's putting together new pack meeting plans. There's opportunities for interactions between dens which is going to lead to a lot more fun and a lot more involvement for boys and families. One of the Bear adventures, for instance, gives boys a chance to teach games to younger Cub Scouts, so it's not only a way of having fun but it's also a way for Cub Scouts to demonstrate how they're growing in their leadership skills. There's also more opportunities for recognition during pack meetings, depending on how the pack wants to organize that, boys can be recognized consistently which will encourage them to be involved in the pack meetings and bring their families in to celebrate their successes.

AARON: How do the individual dens transition from the current program to the new program? Is there like a step-by-step process or is it just one smooth transition? Can you talk about that a little bit?

KEN: I sure can. This has been a really important question for everybody but, it's incredibly easy. Starting on June 1st, if you're a new Tiger, a Wolf, Bear, or starting the Webelos program, just use the new program materials that are in the handbooks and materials. They're designed to make it easy to use, and when they finish their current level of program, they can just step into the next step without any problem. Boys that'll be working on their Arrow of Light after that point, they've got two choices. They can keep using the current program or they have the additional option that they can apply some of their previously earned Webelos-level recognitions and their activity badges; some of those can be used for advancement in the new system. We want it to be a simple and straightforward process, and we think we've achieved that.

AARON: Ken, can you tell us a little bit about the transition between Webelos and Arrow of Light?

KEN: Oh, absolutely. There's been some concerns about that from den leaders. For dens that wish to use the current program, they're certainly welcome to do that. All they need to do is continue using the current handbook, and as a bonus they can use any of the new adventure pins to count for the activity badges in the current program.

PAT: Ken, it sounds like there's all kinds of great things for the kids. What about for the parents? How do we get them involved?

KEN: The best way is to simply ask them. What we've done with the den leader materials is we developed them in great detail, and a thoughtful, strategic den leader's going to ask parents to help right from the start. Den leaders can share pages from the new den leader guides to give to parent helpers and ask them to help organize a part of the meeting. So before you get ready for asking for that help, if you've got a plan in mind and can point to a specific task, they're going to have a hard time saying no, and the materials will make it easy for them to be successful when they deliver those experiences. That's probably the biggest point for a novice or inexperienced den leader is everything's in one place and it makes it easy to help new parents become involved.

AARON: Speaking of leaders, I'm a relatively new Cubmaster at my son's pack out in Frisco, Texas, and some of the other parents and leaders who have

been around longer than me are already... I'm sensing a little bit of maybe good old days syndrome. And there's a little bit of "What was wrong it before? Why are things changing"? How do you respond to that?

KEN: If you look at it from the point of view of change, if Cub Scouting had never changed, boys would still be wearing knickers.

AARON: (Laughs)

KEN: We want them to have a great Cub Scout experience, but we want them to have a great Cub Scout experience that's relevant to boys in the 21st century and not repeating the sort of things that we did 20, 30, 40 years ago which were great for us but, there's a lot more potential to connect with boys using (an) upgraded set of materials.

PAT: Ken, you've talked about what you've done to help these kids, make it an exciting experience, and you've talked about simplifying the program. What have y'all done to make this a great experience for the leaders?

KEN: The most important things we've done is we've made it stronger by making it simpler. The overall system is seven adventures produces a rank advancement. And so that way of tracking progress, we've made as simple as possible so that there's not a lot of retraining as leaders move through the process. It's about the support materials, and what we know from the research is that leaders want something that they can have all in one place that gives them everything they need to be successful. I ran into a den leader who is involved in our pilot process in 2013. I saw him

last week at a training event, and he was an experienced den leader, but he worked with a novice den leader in the piloting, and they were both very complimentary about how easy it was to use and how much fun the boys had using those materials. So it's the quality of the materials for leaders that support a quality program for boys is the great innovation for this process.

AARON: You mentioned everything you need in one place and that one place is ---

KEN: It's a den leader guide.

AARON: Okay.

KEN: There's a guide for Tiger den leaders, for Wolf, for Bear, and for Webelos leaders who'll work with the boys pursuing the Webelos and the Arrow of Light awards. Four different volumes with anything they could possibly want to make the process happen.

PAT: Where can our listeners get this guide?

KEN: You can go down to your local Scout shop and pick up a hard copy of that, but one thing that is a response to leader needs is it'll also be available as an e-book. They'll be released on Amazon.com and there's already a number of scouting publications available there so that's going to make it more convenient for leaders to have it at their fingertips at all times.

PAT: Wow. So it sounds like you're really moving to platforms where I can get it when I need it as a new leader.

KEN: It's no excuses scouting. We want everybody to have every opportunity to do a great job with the materials.

AARON: So those guides are obviously the most important resources. Are there any other resources you'd recommend that are available to help parents and Cub Scout leaders' transition to the new program?

KEN: Absolutely. There's still some of the standard enrichment resources, like the how-to book, the Cub Scout Leader Book has anything you want to know about the administration and delivery of Cub Scouting at a den level and a pack level. Training's in the process of being updated to reflect the new program and to improve the delivery system so that leaders can complete the training on their own time and their own schedule and still be ready for a high quality experience. Roundtable support's available, and there's also a series of webinars that have been produced and recorded to communicate all the details of the program for Cub leaders, for den leaders, and for Scout leaders involved in the LDS program.

PAT: Is there anything else about adopting the new Cub Scout program that we haven't talked about that you'd like to share with our listeners?

KEN: Hopefully everybody listening to this has already been there, and if they haven't yet, please check it out and tell your friends. It's the program update website, www.scouting.org/programupdates - it has all the updated materials. It's updated regularly. It's a great place to start right now and will keep you informed as to all the changes that are coming up and how to be as ready as possible for those changes.

The most important thing is, always remember what's best for the boys that you work with. They deserve a program that's full of fun and full of adventure, and the commitment that den leaders have to use the new program material to deliver that program is going to be the best advice possible.

PAT: Ken, thank you for all of your hard work on this Cub Scout adventure and working with the adventure team of volunteers who spent so much time developing this. It's going to be great to see this roll out in May. So thank you for taking the time to help ensure that this is a smooth transition to the new program.

KEN: Thank you very much.

AARON: Now before we get to the Reminders and Tips, here's a preview of what's coming up on ScoutCast.

(ScoutCast – STEM)

AARON: Tune into the 2014 May CubCast on how to incorporate STEM into your den and pack meetings. Now it's time for Reminders and Tips. Why don't we start with you, Pat?

PAT: Be sure to start finalizing details for your summer camping opportunities. This includes day camp, family camp, resident camp, and pack overnights. Make sure that you have all the equipment checked out so that everything is working properly.

AARON: Also, make sure parents are making fee payments and the site has been reserved. And, if you haven't already done so, be sure to contact your district about a camp promotion at a pack meeting.

PAT: You also need to be sure that everyone has the proper training. BALOO, which is the Basic Adult Leader Outdoor Orientation and Hazardous Weather training are required for any campout. It's too warm for skiing or sledding and too cold for swimming or picnics, so why not spend the time catching up on your training? Contact your local council for training dates.

AARON: One last thing. Have you supported your local council financially? Be sure to participate in a Friends of Scouting, or FOS, campaign or other Scouting fundraiser. Remember, financial donations don't always mean cold, hard cash. See what gifts-in-kind you may be able to provide to your local council.

Begin Music Under

AARON: So now our March episode comes to an end. Thanks to our guest Ken King, and thanks to you for listening.

PAT: Now I know you've been meaning to but haven't gotten around to it, but don't forget to register for the research panels. Members will get to express their opinions on a variety of topics related to Scouting programs. Just go to www.scouting.org/about/research/researchpanel

AARON: Tune in next month as we explore how to cultivate new and future leaders. Any other topics you'd like to hear about? Just send an e-mail to cubcast@scouting.org or tweet @cubcast.

PAT: Make sure you tell your friends to tune into this episode so everyone you know will be ready for June, and if they don't have internet access, make a CD or an mp3 download to share with them. With that I'm Pat Wellen ---

AARON: And I'm Aaron Derr. You know, I just might have a space theme party for my den to introduce the new Cub Scout adventures. Do you know how to organize a space theme party?

PAT: Uh, no.

AARON: You plan it. Get it? Planet, plan it.

PAT: (Laughs)

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