

AUGUST – GETTING READY FOR BOY SCOUT PROGRAM UPDATES

Music Full then under

BRYAN: The music has started, so that means it's time for the August ScoutCast. Thanks for being a loyal listener. This month is all about getting you ready for updates to the Boy Scout program.

LEE: That's right, Bryan. Benjamin Franklin once said that by failing to plan, you are planning to fail. So even though these updates won't take effect for a few months, we here at ScoutCast think it's important for you to start planning for those updates.

BRYAN: It's so important that we even invited a member of the Boy Scout Program Updates Task Force to join us, so no stone will go unturned.

LEE: What are we waiting for? Let's get started.

Music Fades

LEE: Joining us this month from the Sam Houston Area Council in Houston, Texas, is Diane Cannon. Diane was a member of the 411 Task Force charged with evaluating and making updates to the current program while chairing the advancement subcommittee. So we definitely have the expert with us. She has been involved in Scouting for over 25 years, served in various positions in the unit, council, district, Southern Region, and national level. She currently serves as a chair of the National Advancement Committee.

Welcome to ScoutCast, Diane.

DIANE: Thank you. I'm glad to be with you today.

LEE: Why are the changes being made to the Boy Scout program?

DIANE: It all began back in late 2010 with the BSA's new strategic plan. The plan addressed the needs of Scouting and ways to strengthen the organization as it moved into its second century. One of the goals of the plan called for a thorough review of all of the current programs and an assessment of all the current handbook requirements to ensure that Scouting remained appealing and exciting and culturally relevant to today's youth and their families as we move into our second 100 years.

BRYAN: So as part of that strategic plan, is there anything else that, kind of, prompted these updates, Diane?

DIANE: There was really a desire to make sure that all our programs were focused on the right things. Fun for our youth, but also that the activities were supporting the aims and mission of our organization. As a result, every single rank requirement was looked at with the question being asked, "Does this requirement help to support at least one of the aims of BSA: character development, citizenship training, or personal fitness? Or does the requirements support one of the important tools that we use to teach the aims, like outdoor program or leadership development?" And if the requirement didn't support one of those, then the question was asked, "Why are we doing it?" And going through that, while we've seen significant changes in the Cub Scout and Venturing Programs over the past year existing Boy Scouts requirements were really found to align quite well with the aims and the mission of the BSA.

BRYAN: Excellent.

DIANE: So as a result, the Boy Scout changes are going to be much less extensive than we've seen in the other programs. Scouts are going to find some new requirements, and there's going to be a realignment of some of the Tenderfoot to First Class requirements, but the basic structure of the Boy Scout advancement program is going to remain unchanged.

LEE: Okay. Diane, who developed the changes?

DIANE: In 2010, when the strategic plan came out, a volunteer task force was formed to help meet the objectives that were outlined in the plan. And the task force was first charged with reviewing and evaluating all of the existing program. When that was done, their next task was to recommend any changes that might need to be made to the program.

So all of the program changes that we've been seeing in all of our programs over the past year are the results of the findings of this group of volunteers. There were about 75 people from all across the country that were involved at some point in the process.

The approach was using the aims of Scouting as their guide. They first identified specific outcomes for every rank. What are the things that we want boys to accomplish at each rank as they move through the program? These desired outcomes were then compared to the current requirements, and then new requirements were added to address the things that weren't currently covered.

BRYAN: It's just so cool that it was all volunteers that developed everything.

DIANE: Absolutely. Just like our troops are boy-lead and adult-guided, this

is exactly how the task force was. It was volunteer-driven, and the professionals were there to keep us corralled.

BRYAN: That's awesome. Now, you mentioned Cub Scouting and Venturing having some changes. And you said it's not anything really drastic that's changing in Boy Scouting, but I think our listeners would want to know, what are some of the most significant changes coming in Boy Scouting?

DIANE: Sure. Probably the first thing that a boy's going to encounter when he joins a troop is that the current Scout badge is going to become a rank. Previously, the Scout badge was just a joining requirement and any boy who earned the Arrow of Light simply had it presented to him when he joined the troop as he'd already learned the requirements as a Webelo Scout. But once Scout becomes a rank, boys are going to need to demonstrate their knowledge of the requirements while a member of the troop. So while they may have learned the skills while earning the Arrow of Light, they are going to have to be prepared to demonstrate those skills as a member of the troop in order to have them signed off. So that's the first major change that boys are going to encounter. Most of the other changes deal with the requirements for Tenderfoot to First Class. Probably the best way to look at the changes might be to consider them topically so that we can understand the whys behind the changes.

BRYAN: Okay.

DIANE: Let's take citizenship. In looking at the current requirements, citizenship is approached, primarily, from a patriotism and a civics point of view. But it was felt by the task force that there needed to be a greater emphasis on service and stewardship, both of which

are really important aspects of citizenship that dealt with it really well with the Scout Oath and Scout Law.

When we think about our Scout Motto of Be Prepared, just as many of our merit badges ask a Scout to think ahead about how to prevent injuries or hazards associated with a merit badge, some of the new rank requirements are going to do the same thing. For example, in addition to learning first aid skills that a boy might need to use while on a hike, we might also ask him to think about what he can do ahead of time to help prevent the injury.

BRYAN: Oh, nice.

DIANE: One of the other areas where we're going to see a change is in the outdoor program. The great outdoors is our laboratory for learning for Scouting and the place where boys put their skills into action. So accordingly, we're going to see outdoor ethics as a topic of discussion at each rank with the youth evaluating how they practice those principles on a campout.

So to provide greater opportunity to practice those skills, we're going to see an increase in the number of campouts that are required as the earlier ranks: One for Tenderfoot, two more for Second Class, and three more for First Class. So that's going to be a total of six campouts for First Class as compared to the current requirement of only three.

We're, also, going to see some requirements that deal with energy use and with sustainability. But most importantly, service to others is going to become a part of every rank.

BRYAN: Nice.

DIANE: And in one of the few changes in the upper ranks, half of the service hours for Life rank is going to need to be conservation-

related. If we look at the area of personal fitness, currently we see physical fitness requirements at Tenderfoot rank only. But in an effort to promote lifelong, healthy habits, we're going to see a greater emphasis throughout all of the early ranks on physical fitness as well as on nutrition and other healthy habits.

Then finally, one of the areas where we're going to see change is in Scout spirit - how a Scout lives (the) Scout Oath and Law in his daily life. The Scout spirit requirement at each rank is going to ask the Scouts to tell how they have done their duty to God, an integral part of the Scout Oath, and how they have otherwise lived by the Scout Law. But it's important to note that the inclusion of duty to God within these requirements is not intended to be a discussion. It's simply a boy telling about his own personal experiences or growth defined by his family.

LEE: Diane, those are great examples. As I listen to you, I was wondering what's staying the same?

DIANE: What's staying the same? It sounds like there's a lot changing, doesn't there? But really with the exception of adding Scout rank, the basic advancement structure of the Boy Scout program is going to remain the same.

LEE: Okay.

DIANE: The boys are going to keep learning new Scouting skills at Tenderfoot and Second Class and First Class, and all those requirements can still be worked on simultaneously. The number of merit badges that are required at Star through Eagle are going to remain the same as does the active requirement, the number of service hours, and the number of months that they have to hold the position of responsibility. Our troops are still going to be boy-led.

Patrol leader councils are still going to plan the program, and the Scout Oath and Law are still going to be our guiding compass.

BRYAN: Okay. I got to ask the question that I think all the Scouters at this point are wondering. When are these changes taking effect?

DIANE: Oh, the magic date –

BRYAN: (Laughs)

DIANE: – is January 1st, 2016. The new requirements must not be used before that date even though they will have been released. So for any Scout joining on or after January 1st, getting started is going to be really easy. All he has to do is pick up the handbook and use the new requirements. So what about are our current Scouts? That's the big question. Whatever rank the Scout is in the middle of on January 1st, he has until the end of the year, December 31st, 2016, to finish that rank using the old requirements if he chooses to do so.

BRYAN: Okay.

DIANE: It's the boy's decision whether he wants to stay with the old or switch to the new.

BRYAN: So he could go ahead and switch to the new, on January 1...

DIANE: Right away, he can. Most of the requirements, they're going to be comparable. So he'll be able to see where they fit.

BRYAN: Okay.

DIANE: But at whatever point he does complete that rank that he's working on, as soon as he finishes that rank, then he has to move to the new requirements for the next rank. So if he was working on Star, as soon as he finishes up Star under the old requirements, he then has to move to the new requirements for Life.

BRYAN: Even if it's at the beginning of 2016 still?

DIANE: Right. What we have to remember, though is that there is the exception. Think of Tenderfoot to First Class as one rank.

BRYAN: Okay.

DIANE: Because all those ranks are worked on simultaneously. So if a Scout is working on any of those three ranks as of January 1, he can keep using the old requirements until he finishes First Class -

BRYAN: Oh, that's helpful.

DIANE: - or December 31st, whichever comes first. There is a drop-dead deadline for the use of the old requirements, which is the end of the year, so boys have a whole year to finish up whatever rank they're working on.

LEE: All right. Diane, you've been a great resource, and we have the pleasure of getting the answers directly from you. But what resources are available for Scoutmasters and assistant Scoutmasters and others who want to know more about the upcoming changes?

DIANE: The most exciting resource ahead is the new *Boy Scout Handbook*

that will be coming out in January '16, which will support all of the new requirement changes. We'll also see those requirement changes in the 2016 *Boy Scout Requirements* book, which is published annually. As far as existing materials: The *Troop Leader Guidebook*, *Program Features* for troop, teams, and crews as well as adult leader training like *Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills*, all of those things will also be updated as they come up for reprint. But of course, the best way to learn about any of the changes is to watch the program updates web page on the national website for all the latest and greatest information. That's www.scouting.org/programupdates - that's the site where you can currently find a list of all the new Boy Scout requirements.

BRYAN: That's awesome. So we've covered a lot today. We talked about how these changes were developed, who developed them, some of the big changes; also, what's not changing, and we learned that we want to circle January 1, 2016, on our calendars. So Diane, is there anything else about this Boy Scout program update that you think, our listeners need to know?

DIANE: I would advise the troop leadership to be sure that the Webelo Scouts who visit their troop this fall are aware of the changes, particularly in relation to the Scout badge. Many of these Webelo Scouts are grandfathering themselves, and they're opting to complete the Arrow of Light Award under the old Cub Scout requirements rather than switching to the new ones in the middle of their Webelos experience. So these Scouts and their parents need to be aware of the Scout rank requirements and that boys are going to be asked to demonstrate these as a member of the troop. We want to be sure that our incoming Scouts are ready and prepared and excited about that first badge or rank and not encountering a situation that they weren't expecting.

BRYAN: Just make it a smooth transition for them.

DIANE: Absolutely.

BRYAN: Well, this has been awesome and it's discussions like these that really help illustrate that Scouting's always finding ways to improve the program, and it's all volunteer-driven. I love that. So Diane, thank you for coming to ScoutCast and helping us get ready for these updates.

DIANE: Thank you for asking me.

LEE: Now, let's take a short break and tune in next door to CubCast; then, we'll be right back with Reminders and Tips.

(Aug Cubcast - Online Training)

LEE: Okay. Here we go with Reminders and Tips for August. Bryan, take it away.

BRYAN: Now that you're back from summer camp, it's the perfect time to plan for training. Every boy deserves a trained leader. And without training, it's hard to implement a good program. Training is also important for your junior leaders, so make sure they attend training, too.

LEE: It's also about time for you to begin cultivating a relationship with your local Cub Scout pack. A good way to start this is to provide a pack with a den chief from your troop. Not only will the pack

appreciate the help, but the den chief will be a great asset for the Webelos-to-Scout transition in the spring.

BRYAN: If you can't make it to the National Order of the Arrow Conference this month, Bryan on Scouting has you covered. I'll be blogging live from the Michigan State University campus, interviewing Arrowmen, and sharing stories from this once-in-a-lifetime 100th anniversary event. Go to blog.scoutingmagazine.org to check it out.

Lee: Now for the *Boys' Life* plug. Be sure to check out the August issue as they commemorate the end of World War II with a story about the best World War II museums in the United States.

Begin Music Under

LEE: So that's a wrap for the August ScoutCast. Thanks to our guest, Diane Cannon for joining us.

BRYAN: And thanks to you for listening. Any other topic that you think we should talk about?

LEE Just send us an email to ScoutCast@scouting.org. or a tweet to [@BSAScoutCast](https://twitter.com/BSAScoutCast). We'd love to hear from you. I'm Lee Shaw...

BRYAN: And I'm Bryan Wendell. So what are you waiting for? Go get ready for those updates!

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