

OCTOBER – ADVANCED TRAINING: WHAT’S IN IT FOR YOU?

Music Full then Under

BRYAN: I love the sound of that music 'cause I know it means it's time for the October ScoutCast. I'm Bryan on Scouting blogger, Bryan Wendell. This month is all about advanced training, specifically, what's in it for you.

PAULA: And I'm Paula Murphy, managing editor of *Boys' Life*, *Scouting*, and *Eagles' Call* magazines. And by "you," we mean both leaders and youth alike. There's enough training available for everyone in your troops and crews.

BRYAN: I've taken some advanced training, and let me tell you, folks, for your Scouting experience, it's a real game changer.

PAULA: So stay tuned as Don Wendell joins us to explain why you should look into advanced training.

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PAULA: Eagle Scout Don Wendell has served as an adult Scouter for Circle Ten Council in Dallas, Texas, for 25 years. He has been involved in training youth and adults as a course director for Wood Badge and the National Advanced Youth Leadership Experience. Don has recently served as the National Advanced Leadership Training Chair. In Wood Badge, he's known as Owl, but Bryan calls him Dad. Welcome to ScoutCast, Don.

DON: (Laughs.) Thank you very much.

PAULA: So Don, what exactly is advanced training, and how is that different from basic training?

DON: Okay. Let's be sure, first of all, that we're talking about the same thing when we say "advanced training." I'm going to be discussing advanced leadership training. Now, certainly, in BSA, there are other trainings that could be considered advanced related to specific skills or activities. So I'm (going to) focus on the leadership training component of advanced training.

PAULA: Okay.

DON: First of all, basic training provides the Scouters or the Scouts the basic tools necessary to serve in their leadership position. And it's certainly a valuable component of the overall BSA training continuum. And it gives them the information that they need to be able to perform in a very efficient and effective manner. But the advanced leadership training then takes it to the next level. It accelerates their skills. It really puts them in a situation to be the most effective leader that they can be.

BRYAN: So what are the benefits of advanced training, and why is it so important for an adult or a Scout to go to that next level after basic training?

DON: It results in better programs. It's a better experience for the youth. It certainly helps the youth to get the most out of the program. When you have effectively trained leaders, advanced trained leaders, both youth and adults that the program is just basically better. And then if the better programs lead to a better experience for the kids, and if the kids are having a great experience in Scouting, they're going to stay in Scouting.

Okay. So, how does training benefit the person? From a youth standpoint, going to advanced leadership training will certainly make them a better leader. It gives them leadership skills that they're (going to) be using in Scouting and school. It's (going to) better prepare them for what they do after they finish their youth Scouting career. It helps them understand people better. It gives them those skills to deal with leadership situations that they might be encountering, team development when they're in a group environment, they understand what teams will go through. There's a number of benefits for the youth in a variety of ways that better prepare them for what's (going to) be happening not only in Scouting but beyond Scouting.

And then, for the adults it's the same thing. It puts them in situations where they're better prepared to be an effective leader. They're better prepared to deal with situations whether it's the team situation or a teaching situation, whether they're encountering making decisions. These are all things that they take a look at, and it just strengthens the individual, makes them certainly a better leader, (and) makes them more effective in dealing with people.

PAULA: We've established a very important nature of advanced training. What specific courses are there for adults?

DON: I'm going to mention two of the main ones. First is Wood Badge. This is offered on a council level. It's really designed for anyone whether they are Cub leaders, troop leaders, Varsity team leaders, Venturing crew leaders, or even district or council board members. As I mentioned, offered on the council level, there are some prerequisites. You have to have completed the basic training for your particular Scouting position. And then, Wood Badge takes those skills and puts them into practice. Really, it's a leadership course. We like to say when we're promoting the Wood Badge program, not only are you improving and enhancing your leadership skills

for Scouting, but you're also doing the same thing for other aspects of your life, your job, your family. It's a very powerful, high-level leadership program that we certainly encourage all adults to participate in.

Then, beyond Wood Badge is an even higher level of training called either the Philmont Leadership Challenge or the Summit Leadership Challenge. And these are experiential courses where you take what you learn in Wood Badge, and you put them into practical use in a team setting.

BRYAN: Yeah, you've been telling me, Dad, about that Philmont Leadership Challenge and Summit Leadership Challenge. I think it sounds really cool. Is there a prerequisite for that? You have to have finished all of Wood Badge; is that right?

DON: That's absolutely correct. You have to have completed Wood Badge. You don't necessarily have to have played your ticket.

BRYAN: Okay.

DON: As a matter of fact, going to the Summit or the Philmont Leadership Challenge is a great ticket item. You have to have completed the course itself.

BRYAN: Okay. So, what about for the kids? The Scouts and Venturers have advanced training opportunities available for them. They can't do Wood Badge, right? So, what courses do they take?

DON: First of all, just like for the adults, there are some prerequisites. And for the youth, it's the introduction to leadership skills for their particular unit whether it's a troop or a team or a crew or a ship. Once they've completed

that, then they're eligible for the National Youth Leadership Training, or NYLT, as we like to call it. Just like Wood Badge, it's a council-level course, and it's very similar to Wood Badge. The courses are aligned so that the Scoutmaster who has been to Wood Badge and his senior patrol leader who's been to NYLT are speaking at the same language of leadership. They're on the same page. They talk about forming, storming, norming and performing; they'll know they're dealing with issues of team development. So, those courses are not identical, but they are very similar in teaching the same leadership skills.

PAULA: Okay

DON: Then, after NYLT, comes the National Advanced Youth Leadership Experience or NAYLE, N-A-Y-L-E, as we like to call it for short. It's like the Philmont and Summit Leadership Challenges. It's experiential. It's taking what they learned at NYLT and putting it into practical use. Now keep in mind both the NAYLE and PLC, SLC are national courses. So the cool thing about these courses is you're there with Scouts from all over the country and that really makes that such a powerful course. You're put into a crew with kids you don't know from all parts of the country, and you're working together in a team environment going through those stages of team development. It's a very, very powerful learning opportunity for Scouts.

Now, the NAYLE program is expanding. We offer NAYLE at all four of the High Adventure Bases. The courses are the same as far as curriculum goes, but they're also site-specific, and we take advantage of the unique features of the particular site. For example, at Sea Base, they go out on a boat. At Northern Tier, they're canoeing.

Then, there's one more in the youth area, and this is the NYLT Leadership Academy. This has been offered in the Northeast Region for ten years. But in last year of 2014, we opened it up to Scouts throughout the country,

and now it's become a national program, and we're rolling it out to the regions over the next few years. This past summer it was held in St. Louis, and then, in 2016, it's going to be in Long Beach, California. It is a train-the-trainer type of course where the kids who participate are learning to be very effective presenters. They're learning to be able to evaluate effectively presentations in various situations they might encounter in Scouting and learning leadership along the way. So, for kids looking for advanced leadership, there are three what we consider really powerful courses: NYLT, NAYLE, and then, the NYLT Leadership Academy. And kids who go to the Leadership Academy are well positioned to become very effective staff members, either NYLT or NAYLE, because they've gone through how to give presentations and how to evaluate presentations and that type of thing.

Kodiak is certainly a program that can be conducted on a crew level. There's a national syllabus and a national curriculum, but it's more of a council and even can be on a crew level.

PAULA: Wow. There are some amazing leadership opportunities for the kids in Scouting. How do you motivate youth to take the training?

DON: That's a good question. It starts with the parents. Like a lot of Scouting activities, parental involvement and parental encouragement is very important. The parents need to see the value of the program. And that's one of the things we try to do is to be sure that all the information we put out from fliers to videos really talks about what do you get out of the program and what a positive experience it can be. Also, units that have, kind of established a culture of training where training is an expectation. Speaking from personal experience, when I was involved as a Scoutmaster we tried to create that in the unit. It's kind of expected you go to NYLT. So if the youth can create that culture of training where you just

think about as you advance, “Gosh, I get to be senior patrol leader or patrol leader,” or “I’m (going to) be going to NYLT because of people coming back talking about what a cool experience they had.”

We have to be able to make it fun. Any training, whether it's for youth or adults, has got to be fun. It's got to be worthwhile so when the kids finish they think, “Wow that was worth it!” And then one of the more important ways of getting people to go is when their peers are saying, “You got to go to NAYLE. You got to go to NYLT or the Leadership Academy.” That's, also, a very important part.

BRYAN: So, that's how to get kids motivated. Now, when we're talking about adults, you've got to convince them that it's worth them taking a week of vacation for some of these and spending their own money to get trained. So, how do you overcome that barrier; how do you motivate adults to go to these trainings?

DON: Peer pressure is part of it, at least in the troop that I was involved with. It was like, “Oh, hey, welcome to the troop. When are you going to Wood Badge”?

BRYAN: Yeah.

DON: (Laughs) In a particular troop that I was involved with, that was a requirement that they go to Wood Badge. Now, that's certainly not a BSA thing. That was an internal requirement that our troop had. And we never got any pushback because everyone was talking up what a great experience they had in Wood Badge. With adults, they have to understand that they're going to benefit from it because the first question is, “Well, what's in it for me? I'm (going to) have to spend \$200 or \$300, take a week's vacation...” or in case of Wood Badge, it could be a two and

three-day weekend "...What's in it for me?" So we have to sell the values of Wood Badge. Not only does it make you a better leader, it's (going to) make you better as an employee or as a supervisor in your work or in your church or in your home or whatever the situation is. Because in Wood Badge, there's a little bit of Scout skills involved, but mostly it's leadership that applies wherever you are. These are timeless leadership skills that translate to whatever situation you might encounter as a leader. So, to answer your question, Bryan, the main thing is the adults have to know "what's in it for me."

BRYAN: Uh-huh.

DON: And it has to be something that they feel like that they're (going to) get value from and that it will benefit them in a variety of different situations.

PAULA: Don, I'm sure that all of this information has really piqued the curiosity of a lot of our listeners. So, what resources are available for anyone wanting to learn more about advanced training opportunities?

DON: First, I'll start with your local council for Wood Badge and NYLT. Every council has a website. Go to that website. There's (going to) be a link to training. And from there, you should be able to find information on Wood Badge or NYLT. Those that are offered on a council basis. Call your district training chair if you can't find the information through the website, and they will be able to provide you with information for Wood Badge and NYLT.

And then for the others, and we're talking about NAYLE and NYLT and the Leadership Academy. The best place to start is www.scouting.org/training if you go there, all of the information will be there on these particular programs. Also, each of the High Adventure Bases, Philmont, Northern Tier, Sea Base and the Summit, on their website, they will have a link or

information about the NAYLE or the Leadership Challenge program.

BRYAN: Now, is there anything else about advanced training that we missed or that you wanted to share with the listeners?

DON: There's one thing... it was a quote that James E. West said. Someone had asked him, "What are the three most pressing needs of BSA?" And he said, "Number one, training. Number two, more training. Number three, even more training." (Laughs.) That sort of sums it up. That's what James E. West was saying a long time ago. That still applies today because training is so important, not only for the youth because it's giving them those all-important leadership skills that goes right along with what we're all about in Scouting.

For adults, it makes them better leaders. Better leaders means better programs, and better programs means the kids are (going to) have fun, and they're going to stay in the program.

BRYAN: Well, Dad, in my own experience with advanced training, that's been one of the highlights of my time in Scouting was when I took Wood Badge out at Philmont with you, Dad, as the course mentor, and then I got to staff at Philmont as well, and we were on staff together. That was one of the highlights not just because of the advanced training and how great the Wood Badge program is, but just getting to share that time at Philmont with you. So thanks for that, and thanks for coming on ScoutCast today and telling us about advanced training and the importance of getting trained.

DON: My pleasure.

PAULA: Now, before jumping in with Reminders and Tips, let's check in on CubCast.

(Cubcast – Uniform in Uniformity)

PAULA: ScoutCast listeners might be able to get some use out of that one, too. But now it's time for our magnificent monthly reminders.

BRYAN: Let's start with council roundtables. Check with your local Scouting professional, your local council service center or council website or your Scout calendar to locate meeting sites and times. There's really no better way to help deliver a quality program than to experience the idea sharing that goes on at those roundtables.

PAULA: Here's a question you should be asking yourself: Are all your committee positions filled? Just to review, you should have a committee chair, secretary/treasurer, advancement chair, outdoor chair, membership chair and a finance/fundraising chair.

BRYAN: The committee chair's responsible for filling all the slots, but leaders can help out by remaining on the lookout for good candidates at their work, church, neighborhood, even the gym.

PAULA: October means that it's time for the playoffs. Who will be the best Major League Baseball teams of 2015? While you wait to find out, be sure to check out this month's *Boys' Life* magazine to read about the arguably top five World Series teams of all time.

BRYAN: You just heard all about advanced training. Well, we've got the perfect companion piece for what you just learned. It's your September-October edition of *Scouting* magazine. Our story includes a guide to getting trained that tells you exactly what you need to know to make sure every leader in your unit is properly trained. There's also a story about Beast

Feast, the largest outdoor cooking demonstration in Scouting. So grab your fork.

BEGIN MUSIC UNDER

BRYAN: So that's it for the October ScoutCast. Thank to my dad, Don Wendell, for sharing his wisdom on why we all need advanced training.

PAULA: And thank you for listening. Hope you're back next month for a spirited discussion on Scout safety.

BRYAN: Are there other topics we should be discussing? Don't be shy. Just send us an e-mail, ScoutCast@scouting.org, or Tweet us @BSAScoutCast. We read them. I promise. With that, I'm Bryan Wendell.

PAULA: And I'm Paula Murphy. And since you're online anyway, go check out the training.

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