

## **Suggestions for Unit Leaders for Order of the Arrow Unit Elections**

A Scouts election into the Order of the Arrow can be one of the most significant and life altering experiences that he can receive from scouting.

Electing candidates from medium to large size troops and teams can be a challenge. The basic problem is that many Scouts, especially the older ones, may not be familiar with the younger Scouts and are reluctant to vote for them and also the younger Scouts may not be familiar with an older scout and their accomplishments, especially in units where ages are not mixed.

This can be a significant problem, especially with youth who are quiet and introverted. Noticing their low election results, a number of Unit Leaders have developed a procedure to directly address this situation. It has produced significant improvements in the election results in these units.

Unit Leaders, if they are members of the OA, or a leader designated OA youth member , may choose to talk to the unit in advance of the election night about the OA and the experiences and benefits that they have had as members.

Some Unit Leaders announce the youth's rank, number of nights of camping, and service hours as the names are read prior to the election. Others include similar information on a preprinted ballot of names. Please note that preprinted ballots can also greatly reduce the amount of time required for the election process.

Another technique is to print the individual Scouting record of each candidate, listing his name, grade, rank, number of merit badges, summer camp years, camping nights, leadership positions held, and special awards or events attended for the unit members to examine prior to the election.

Regardless of the procedure used, the purpose of this is to help the unit members know something about the candidates before they vote.

The Unit Leader still decides the names to appear on the ballot, listing only those who have demonstrated Scout Spirit and who meet the OA eligibility requirements.

A Scout whose name is being withheld because of Scout Spirit needs to be told why in advance.

Also, some Scouts may not be interested in becoming OA members.

The Unit Leader should offer the eligible candidates the opportunity to "opt out" of the announcement of eligibility or being on the ballot.

Units Leaders may also decide that the results should be announced immediately after the election, even though this may take away the "surprise" at call out.

The benefit here is that the Scout does not have to stew over whether or not he was elected. Early announcement of results also helps ensure families plan as soon as possible to have their Scout available for the Ordeal weekend.

The call out can occur at any time after being elected, although it is usually done at a Summer Camp.

These suggestions may produce better election results.