

The FORUM

Venturing, Sea Scouting and Exploring Newsletter since 2003
October 2020 Issue

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WHAT IS THE FORUM!

The FORUM is a National cluster concept and a friendly way to help Scouting Leaders exchange ideas and programs among our Troops, Crews, Ships, Posts, Councils, Areas, Regions and National.

The FORUM is shared by Volunteers and Professionals across the country.

The FORUM has been published monthly since 2003 and is not an official publication of any Council, Area, Region or National. It is a Volunteers and Professionals newsletter to promote our senior program. Help support our teenage program by sending the FORUM your stories, Newsletters. Council articles, By-Laws, Questions and Best Practices to share with others.

As always, articles, questions and comments are welcome. Promote Venturing, Sea Scouting and Exploring by promoting your Unit and Council etc. stories. We are seeking support from anyone interested in working on the newsletter.

Thanks for all you do!

Bob the BEAR Monto, Editor in Chief

How to submit an article

The FORUM would like any articles and event promotions you have on Exploring, Sea Scouting and Venturing programs from your units, council etc. Articles with photos are best. Articles with youth (under 18) must use BSA Youth Protection guidelines.

Attach your article as a Word document (preferable method) with identified photos (With descriptions of photo), clipart, etc. and send to rmonto47@gmail.com. Please email Bob "The BEAR" Monto by the 25th of the month with your articles. Since the FORUM is published monthly, if you miss one month it will get in the next month.

Your article should also include contact information and name of the individual submitting the article.

Use subject line FORUM to highlight this is a FORUM email.

Please edit your article.

All photos should have permission of all the participants in the photos. Indicate in the email that permission has been granted.

Scouting Youth Protection Guidelines apply.

Submit a brief bio of the author(s) of the article.

Thanks for all you do for Youth

Bob "the BEAR" Monto

FORUM Newsletter Editor

FORUM Articles for Download

The Current FORUM Newsletter:

http://www.minsi-southmountain.com/newsletters/current_forum.php

The FORUM Back Issues

http://www.minsi-southmountain.com/venturing_archive.htm

Large Crews

http://minsi-southmountain.com/newsletters/documents/FORUM-Crew_27-Large_Crews_articles.pdf

UPDATED March Crew 27 Large Crew Series (Articles on Large Crew Operations)

SSS Soaring Eagle 7007 - Overland Park, Kansas SCUBA – Dooba – Dooo!

What do Sea Scouts do in Kansas and Missouri? This month we went crazy on SCUBA! We started off with three days of intense training at a local aquatic training center in the pool. Then we planned a weekend trip to a lake for certification dives.



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**SSS Soaring Eagle 7007 - Overland Park, Kansas
SCUBA – Dooba – Dooo!**



But it wasn't just diving—we also camped, prepped meals, and developed crazy leadership skills that we'll have with us the rest of our lives!



SSS Soaring Eagle 7007 - Overland Park, Kansas SCUBA – Dooba – Dooo!

Watersports are also a big part of our activities! Our area has a large number of reservoirs that are great for freshwater fishing and water activities.



Local freshwater lakes (like this one at Perry Reservoir near Topeka, Kansas) have well-equipped marinas and qualified instructors that are just itching to show youth how to safely pilot watercraft.



And then there's the fishing... several councils in Kansas have their own private lake at their summer camp. This one is a spring-fed lake that is well stocked with fish and is large enough to easily handle small boat sailing. It's a delight to visit!

SSS Soaring Eagle 7007 - Overland Park, Kansas **SCUBA – Dooba – Dooo!**

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Oh, and that lake at Camp Jayhawk ALSO has an enchanting swimming area. Lake swimming is more fun than pool swimming!

SSS Soaring Eagle 7007 - Overland Park, Kansas SCUBA – Dooba – Dooo!



Somehow, we ALWAYS time find to go shoot! With qualified instructors, our Sea Scouts are becoming experts at marksmanship!



Oscoda Women Make Michigan Scouting History

For Savahanna Webster, 16 and Erykah LaLonde, 18, both from Oscoda, the weekend of 2-4 October was quite an ordeal – literally! Both young women are members of Venturing Crew 7 chartered to the Oscoda Post 274 of the American Legion and both were elected by their Crew in December of 2019 as candidates to Scouting's Honor Society – The Order of the Arrow.

Access to the Order of the Arrow is new in Scouting for young women participants. Scouting became fully coeducational at all levels in February of 2019 when Scouts-BSA, the intermediate division, joined the junior division (Cub Scouts) and the senior division (Explorers, Sea Scouts & Venturers) as a fully coeducational activity. The senior division of the BSA has been coeducational since 1969 and the junior division became coeducational in early 2018. With that policy change, membership in the Order of the Arrow was officially opened to young women and senior division units (Posts, Ships & Crews) were permitted to elect members to the Order.

In Venturing, election is contingent on having received the Discovery Award and having spent at least 15 nights in the previous two years camping under canvas or an open sky. 'Glamping' in trailers or cabins can't be counted! Both young women met this requirement many times over as both had participated in summer camps and the 2019 World Scout Jamboree held in West Virginia where scouts from 170 countries camped for nearly two weeks. Savahanna and Erykah not only have the Discovery Award, they both hold the Outdoor Bronze Rank and are more than halfway to RANGER rank. Ranger is considered a higher rank than Eagle Scout by most in Scouting. About sixty scouts out of 1,000 earn Eagle Rank, only one Venturer out of 1,000 earns RANGER.

Election is not the same thing as becoming a member, for that, both young women had to attend a weekend long ordeal. Their ordeal was originally scheduled for April or June of 2020 but those dates were cancelled due to the pandemic. By September, the Michigan Crossroads Council of the Boy Scouts of America and the Agaming Maangogwan Lodge of the Order of the Arrow had figured out how to conduct an ordeal safely under the pandemic conditions.

Eager to complete their obligation to become members of the Order of the Arrow, both Venturers signed up for the October Ordeal at the D Bar A Scout Ranch near Metamora, MI. On the 2nd of October, Nona Mapes, herself an adult member of the Order of the Arrow, drove the two young women south for their ordeal. Adult women volunteers in Scouting have been inducted into the Order of the Arrow since 1988 when the Boy Scouts of America began allowing women to serve as Scoutmasters. Nona was inducted after the Troop Committee of Troop 463 in Rockville, Maryland nominated her to the Amangamek Wipit Lodge of the Order of the Arrow in 2009. Adults must also complete ordeals and meet the overnight camping requirements to become Order of the Arrow members.

The night of the 2nd, the young women camped under the stars after a brief ceremony and the 3rd was filled with cheerful service as they worked to improve the D Bar A Scout Ranch. D-A is the only Scout Ranch east of the Rockies with its own herd of horses. Troop 7 from Oscoda (Also chartered to Post 274 of the American Legion) camped there for a week in the summer of 2019 to earn the horsemanship merit badge. Both Erykah and Savahanna had been at that camp so they were both familiar with the layout of the facility.

On the evening of the 3rd of October, after a full day of service, Erykah and Savahanna were brought together with other inductees for the ceremony admitting them to the Order of the Arrow. As it turns out, they are two of the first three women in Michigan who are participants in Scouting programs to gain admission to the Order of the Arrow. The third young woman was Natalie Norris, a twenty-year-old Venturer.

All three young women are happy to serve and proud of their accomplishment! It is remarkable that two of the three hail from Oscoda.

Young men and women who are eleven or older or who have completed the fifth grade can call Dr. Mapes at (937)212-8435 if they are interested in Scouting.

Oscoda Women Make Michigan Scouting History



Erykah LaLonde, Natalie Norris & Savahanna Webster – the first three young women in Michigan to become members of the Order of the Arrow – Scouting’s National Honor Society

On the Proposal to Reduce the Age of Senior Scouting

By Melissa Mader, Venturing Participant



Everyone in Scouting should be aware of The Churchill Project by now. This is the initiative by the National Headquarters of the Boy Scouts of America to preserve the organization in the face of lawsuits dealing with child abuse in Scouting's past. The Churchill Project focuses on six key areas and the National Headquarters is doing the best possible job to try to preserve Scouting in the United States while fairly compensating the victims of abuse. I applaud our leadership.

However, one particular part of their proposal troubles me. The National Headquarters has proposed that all youth Scouting end on a person's 18th birthday. We saw murmurs of this when Scouting created the Venturing Participant membership class. This was done for valid legal reasons since the people between the ages of 17 and 21 are legal adults in the states, but....

Venturing, Sea Scouts and Exploring have long been a safe place for young adults to continue to absorb Scouting ideals and participate in and lead Scouting programs. Not every young person is ready for Scouting programs at age 11 or 14 and as we all know, Scouting is largely out of reach for low-income families in this country because uniforms, registrations, camps, camporees, Philmont, Jamborees, etc. are expensive. Campership programs *are* available but the young adults who really need them do not have access because they can't afford the membership fee. Since camperships are only for registered Scouts, the impoverished looking in from the outside can't apply for them. Allow young people to turn 16 and get jobs and now a few of them join Scouting because they can afford it. I know Venturers who have done this in my crew. If they have to leave on their 18th birthday, they are not likely to bother joining. Scouting is a particularly bright opportunity for these Scouts as it provides them with life skills and resources that will serve them well for the rest of their lives and careers.

For the young adults who do join Scouting, the ability to remain a Scout as they finish high school (many graduate high schools at age 19 and a few at 20) is priceless. Unable to afford university education, or not ready to move away for other reasons, many young people turn to community colleges and continue to participate locally in Scouting until their 21st birthday. Once again, many Venturers in my crew have done this. Scouting provides a source of stability and an infusion of ideals during an otherwise turbulent transition from youth to adulthood.

On the Proposal to Reduce the Age of Senior Scouting

By Melissa Mader, Venturing Participant

“The Senior Division is tiny,” you say; with Exploring being the largest component, then Venturing and then Sea Scouts. “Since it is so small, there is obviously little need for it so we can shed the 18 to 20-year olds without any damage.” This is *not* true. There is a large need for them and not just at the unit level. Camp staffs depend heavily on their 18 to 20-year olds. These members are on staff because they love the program the Boy Scouts of America is allowing them to continue to be a part of. Ask any local camp counselor, they are not in it for the money. If these young adults lose their connection to the program at 18, at the crux between high school and adulthood, many staff will leave earlier as the draw of adult employment strengthens, and scouting will lose them.

Scouting has developed magnificent leadership development programs like National Youth Leadership Training (NYLT) and National Advanced Youth Leadership Experience (NAYLE). Look at how many NYLT Senior Patrol Leaders (SPLs) are over 18 – look at how many NAYLE Senior Crew Leaders (SCLs) are over 18! All of these youth are serious about giving back to the program that gave them so much and if we turn them all into adults on their 18th birthdays we will rob them of the opportunity to provide years of service to younger Scouts as youth leaders. Staffers are often not yet ready to be SCLs until they are 18 because of age requirements to attend these intense programs. Most NYLT courses don’t allow participants until they are 13 and frankly, youth are not ready until they are 14 at least. That means not attending future courses such as NAYLE, until they are 15, not staffing until they are 16. This gives SCLs one year (one course) of staffing experience until they steer the ship next year as SCL. How will these leadership trainings handle this? And all this assumes that the NYLT participants start at age 14. Many do not attend until they are 15 or 16. You can see how the proposal to end scouting participation on the 18th birthday robs these leadership training programs of the youth leadership that is essential to conduct them!

One option would be to have Scouts attend NYLT earlier. This won’t work! In my experience being assigned to be the Crew Guide for the youngest crew at NAYLE, when Scouts attend these trainings too young, it robs them - and sometimes fellow participants, of experiencing the course fully. Another option is for more adult involvement. That is a quick NO. These trainings, just like Venturing, are youth-led and should remain that way. The beauty of having youth staff and being youth-led would be taken away. The threat that this move poses to NAYLE is personal for me because my experience at NAYLE when I was 16 drastically changed the course of my Scouting experience, leading me to get so much out of the program. I am worried for these programs that mean so much to me and other Scouts that have been through them. Our leadership model lacks adequate resources when you rob it of the 18 through 20-year olds.

Another program that I have become involved in is my Council Venturing Officer’s Association (VOA). VOAs are opportunities for experienced, competent Venturers to lead at the council level. During my time in the CVOA, I used my experience as a seasoned trainer to provide trainings across the Council that are mandatory for advancement. Others programs my CVOA led covered more areas of the ALPS (Adventure, Leadership, Service & Personal Growth) advancement model, and built a network of active Venturers across the council. We also represent Venturers at council executive meetings. VOAs rely on Venturers with substantial experience at the crew level. That takes a couple years to obtain. Leaving Venturing at the 18th birthday precludes joining the VOA since that is about the age when Venturers have enough leadership experience to be effective in a VOA. I joined my Council VOA at 18. After serving on Council VOAs, Venturers move up to Area VOAs, then Regional, and finally National. To be able to move through all four levels without skipping would mean joining the CVOA the same year you join Venturing. That would not make for effective, knowledgeable CVOA leadership. This proposal disqualifies the already meager population of Venturers interested in serving on VOAs.

On the Proposal to Reduce the Age of Senior Scouting

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Ending Venturing at 18 makes it a 4-year program while Scouts BSA continues to be a 7-year program. Scouts have from age 11 to 18 to earn Eagle; many don't Eagle until late in their 17th year. Why would we think Venturers could achieve Summit in 4 years? The Venturing program needs all 7 years to be effective, just like Scouts BSA does. We can't make up for the loss of three years by having Venturing start younger. Venturing is a program for more mature youth; they have more privileges and responsibilities. That is the draw of our program. As an experienced Venturing participant, I see this so clearly.

Having a 7-year program also casts a larger net to attract more participants for our program. Everyone matures at different rates and we need a wide age window to be of the most service to our young adults. I think that keeping the current age limits on the Senior Division participants is essential.

Some Scouts BSA leaders have expressed a concern that Venturing bleeds members from their units. My experience has been that this is not true. Venturing merely provides a place for Scouts, who are looking for more ways to participate, after they age out of troops. Venturers return to their Scout units to serve as leaders to meet Venturing requirements. Venturing also offers Scouts an opportunity to continue to be a member in the BSA when their interests depart from the main focus of their troop. Senior Division programs also provide a place for young people who missed Scouts BSA by providing a similar program keyed to an older audience. The Senior Division programs pick up members that would otherwise have no way to enter the Boy Scouts of America and they provide dynamic leadership opportunities that make young people more knowledgeable, skilled, better teachers and better leaders. In fact, better at everything the modern workplace demands!

A compromise I have seen tossed around is to create a *Rover* program. Rovers is a program for young adults who have aged out of Scouting but still want to participate rather than just serve as adult leaders. Rovers are a common part of Scouting around the world but not currently supported by the BSA. The program gives those who need it a place to socialize and do scouting activities with their peers in the early adult age group. Many simultaneously also serve as adult leaders. I would argue for adding a Rover program in the BSA for those aged 21 to 26 to keep camp staff interested but it doesn't help solve the problem of youth leadership. Rovers is an *adult* program.

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I don't know if the National Board is amenable to input from their constituents. If they are, I hope they will actively resist this initiative to end scouting for everyone in BSA at age 18. It is a huge mistake and will hurt the entire program in many ways. Most notably, it will rob the program of essential youth leadership and move Scouting further away from a youth led model. That movement is dangerous to the livelihood of Scouting as a whole.

Please take the time to let the National Board know how you feel. You can contact them at this address with your thoughts.

Mr. Roger Mosby, CEO
Boy Scouts of America
1325 West Walnut Hill Lane
P.O. Box 152079
Irving, Texas 75015-2079

If you have to send an email, you can use this address but a letter to Mr. Mosby is likely to be most effective! Don't procrastinate, do it now!

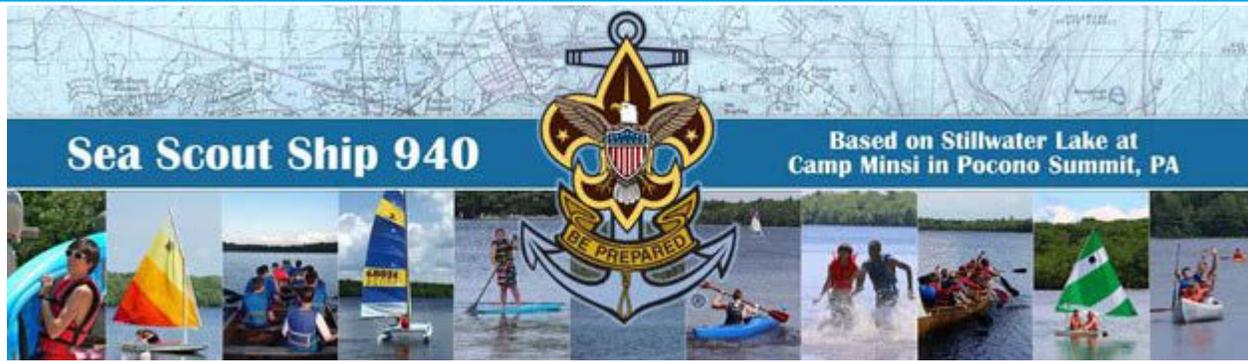
PR@scouting.org

You should also write your Council Board and Council Executive to let them know how you feel. Councils are independent corporations who send voting members to the National Meeting so addressing this issue to them is equally important.

About the Author

Melissa Mader is a Venturing participant in Crew 27 of the National Capital Area Council. She holds Outdoor Bronze Rank, the Pathfinder Award and is an ordeal member of the OA. She has served in a number of Crew leadership positions including Crew President. She has led NYLT both as a staff member and a Senior Patrol Leader and has also staffed NAYLE, NYLT Leadership Academy and Woodbadge. She holds the Council Venturing Leadership Award. A rising sophomore at the University of Maryland, when Philmont closed this summer, she enrolled in a very selective Scouting Aviation Maintenance Experience in Water & Woods Council (Michigan) where senior division scouts and older Scouts BSA youth spend seven weeks rebuilding an actual Cessna aircraft from parts under the supervision of FAA licensed mechanics. She spent this last year serving as VP-Communication for her CVOA (after turning 18).





YOU ARE INVITED – LIVE WATER EVENT – SUNDAY AUGUST 2nd

1 pm to 5 pm, at Camp Minsi's Aquatics Base, 106 Camp Minsi Road, Pocono Summit, PA

THIS EVENT IS OPEN TO PERSPECTIVE NEW MEMBERS. Come learn about Sea Scouts – the BSA's water-based high adventure program for young women and men ages 14 through 20.

Sea Scouts is not just "sea" or "ships". It is any water-based activity the Ship's members (a "ship" like a Scout "troop") decide to experience:

- Whitewater rafting, tubing, canoeing, paddle boards, kayaking
- Sailing Sunfish, boards, Hobie Cats
- Snorkeling, SCUBA, swimming
- Fly and spinner fishing
- Visiting a Coast Guard installation and ship tour
- Assisting the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary safety activities
- And anything fun on, in around and under the water !

Sign up:

Please let us know if you are coming and the total number of family and friends coming by emailing us at: <mailto:contact@ship940.org>.

Please bring a completed Sea Scout application with you in case you like what you see. They can be found at: ship940.org. There is no additional registration fees if you are already a Scout or Venturer.

Event Activities:

- Sail boarding
- Paddle boarding
- Spin rod fishing workshop (bring your rod if you have one)
- Kayaking – plastic
- Kayaking – whitewater competition style
- Canoeing – whitewater competition style 2-person

Agenda:

- 1 pm to 3 pm - Arrive and activity time
- 3 pm to 4 pm – Ship meeting. Elect Officers. Discuss upcoming adventure trips.
- 4 pm to 5 pm – Optional. Open activity time.

VISIT US AT ship940.org or contact us at <mailto:contact@ship940.org>

National Venturing Report

Venturing Newsletter - Fall 2019 Edition



[View Online](#)

[Download PDF](#)

The second edition of the Venturing Newsletter is here! Learn more about what has happened the last three months and what is upcoming in the Venturing world by visiting the link below. Happy New Year and happy reading!

National Venturing Report

As the 2017-2018 Venturing Officer term draws to a close, we would like to share with you all of the amazing happenings in the Venturing world. The Annual Report includes a final letter from this year's NVOA, updates on some of the progress Venturing has made over this past term, as well as the national opportunities for Venturers coming up in the future.

Thank you again for an awesome year!



<https://spark.adobe.com/page/>

National Commodore's Corner

Fall Equinox Edition 20

There's a lot going on this fall – here are a few notes to bring you all up to date.

Program Notes

As we approach the fall equinox, school has started in most places and we are all struggling to figure out how our program is going to work this fall and winter. This has certainly been a difficult summer for most of us, but we have to find ways to persevere. I would like to share a few things that may help.

First, some of the Skippers I hear from seem to be under the impression that we are not allowed to do anything at all – no meetings, no outings, no nothing. I don't think there is any place in the country where that is strictly true, but unfortunately, there is a lot of variation in what you can actually do depending on where you live. To help, BSA has published this [Restart Scouting checklist](#) – if you haven't seen it, please review it and then work with your council and charter organization to find ways to **get out on the water, or at least, try to hold some sort of outdoor activities** before it gets too cold outside. I suspect that in many places, putting a dozen people onto a boat together is not going to work. But I also suspect that there are few places where that dozen people could not maintain social distancing and go kayaking or canoeing. If you are a big boat ship, try something new. Variety in your program is almost always a win, and right now, it is a necessity!



Central Region Open Fishing Tournament

Second, revisit your meetings. A lot of people complain about **Zoom fatigue** but I think a lot of that is rooted in the fact that Zoom makes a poor quality meeting seem even poorer. Meetings that move along briskly, have engaging content, and that actually accomplish things are not nearly as fatiguing and certainly will seem more fun than most of the virtual school out there. I have seen some truly great online meetings – and most were run entirely by the youth. So turn your Quarterdeck loose and ask them to question all the assumptions and reinvent your meetings! (and by the way, that would be a good idea for your in-person meetings too).

Third, look beyond your local area for content. **There is a lot of great innovation in online events going on right now**, from the [Central Region Open Fishing Tournament](#) to the online Rendezvous effort in Southern Region Area 3 to the East and West online Safety at Sea events. There are also things like the Coast Guard Tech Talks – the [upcoming talk on September 22](#) is on radar.

Fourth, take a look at all those boring requirements like [Ordinary 6a](#): *Name the various materials used to manufacture rope, the advantages and disadvantages of each, and the characteristics of laid and braided rope. Discuss the meaning of lay, thread, strand, and hawser. Explain how rope is sized and measured.* There will never be a better time to get that done than now. This is **one of many requirements that can completely be done virtually**. Some ships have been systematically working through these requirements in times when they cannot meet, and report enormous advancement progress this year as a result.

Recruiting and Rechartering

Back to school is usually a good time to recruit, and there is no reason it can't be this year as well. Interestingly, at least a dozen Skippers have told me that 2020 has been their best recruiting year ever. When I ask how, every one of them has said that **peer recruiting** – having the youth in the ship invite a friend – works even with virtual meetings. One of them signed up 4 new youth (taking advantage of online applications) even during a time they weren't meeting in person!

Don't forget to recruit some future Sea Scouts too! Photo courtesy of Steve Bratton



The National Quarterdeck has been promoting peer recruiting (last week was **Sea Scout Recruiting Week** – where they asked each Scout to bring one new person to a ship meeting or activity), and you'll see more from them about this in the near future. Our youth helped save our program by telling the story of what Sea Scouts means to them, now it's time for them to tell that story to prospective new Sea Scouts!

Recharter time is almost here, and it is time to start getting things together. Remember that anyone who turned 18 this year will need to fill out the background check form and complete youth protection training before you can re-register them. We are trying to identify ships who need help as soon as we can, so please let your Commodore know ASAP if your ship is good for recharter-

National Commodore's Corner

Fall Equinox Edition 20

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Most of the district roundtables around the country have gone virtual, which is actually probably an improvement in that it makes them easier to attend. Please **attend your local roundtable**, find out what's going on (like, the recharter schedule and process for your council), and more importantly, take the opportunity to be a visible representative for Sea Scouts and let everyone know what's going on in their district!

Advancement

Several of you have mentioned that lack of ability to conduct swimming events is holding some youth back from advancement. We are offering a **deferral of those swimming requirements** by a rank to help our youth along – see the [BSA COVID-19 FAQ](#) for the details.

Remember that **Scoutbook is the recommended way to track advancement** (we are no longer maintaining the SPARs since most units have stopped using them), but you'll need to track the Swimming deferral off books – since it is temporary we didn't ask for them to change that.

Also, in case you didn't notice, **Scoutbook now allows you to take online payments** using Paypal. It (along with my.scouting) now also allows you to link a Google or Apple account and login that way. Maybe online payments will help recharterers easier this year.

A few of you have pointed out that a couple of advancement requirements were lost in the last edit of the Sea Scout manual. That's being fixed and should be up shortly, but meanwhile, refer to [Advancement Central](#) for the latest requirements.

Seabadge

It seems that there is a huge pent-up demand for virtual Seabadge courses – all those being offered have filled nearly instantly. We're trying to add one more before the end of the year, and more in early 2021. If you haven't yet attended, keep an eye out and prepare to act quickly. Reviews so far have been excellent, and since the fee is much less (no lodging or meals to pay for) and you do not have to travel, maybe now is the time to attend Seabadge!



One of our 2020 National Flagship Fleet photo courtesy of Kathy Weydig

Shopping

Many of us have ordered **genuine US Navy boatswain's pipes** from Jim McCurdy over at The Ship in a Bottle through the years. He is now offering a Sea Scout discount, so if you need a pipe visit [this page](#) and if you are too busy to make your own lanyard, he be happy to make one of those for you too, but he'll also sell you the proper line to make your own! Making your own is another great program opportunity that can be done individually at home. If you don't know how, you are in luck – the classic reference with everything you need to know, the **Ashley Book of Knots**, is now available as a PDF you can download for free [right here](#).

Upcoming

Soon it will be time to **apply for National Flagship**. If you think you might like to do that, now would be a good time to make sure you have your **Journey to Excellence (JTE) requirements** covered. You can also start assembling materials for your application. Reviewing last year's winning presentation would be a good start, you can find it [here](#). Hosting a watch party for those videos might be a good use of an online meeting sometime soon.

Most Council Sea Scout Leadership Award nominations are due soon. Remember that anyone can send in a nomination – if

you see a worthy youth or adult, send in a nomination! The form and instructions can be found [here](#). Council award nominations must be sent to your council, not to national. National, Regional and Area award nominations are due starting in March, so please think ahead to those as well.

That's all for now.

National Commodore's Corner

Sea Promise Updated

As you are probably aware, BSA is committed to making sure that all of our programs and related materials are free of anything not inclusive. In Sea Scouts, one significant element that is questionable is the last line of the Sea Promise, which reads "*seek to preserve the motto of the sea: women and children first.*" While that was the original version, there was a period of time (during part of the time when we were Sea Explorers) when the last line instead was "*to let those who are weaker and less able than myself come first.*" It isn't quite clear exactly when or why it was changed back to the original, but the National Sea Scout Support Committee made the decision that we needed to fix it. We considered returning to the verbiage we used as Sea Explorers instead, but decided that an even simpler form is better: "*to let those less able come first.*" At our request, that change was approved today by the National Program Development Committee, so it is now official.

While most of us know the story of the Birkenhead disaster and can explain why "women and children first" really isn't meant to be not inclusive, many people have a negative initial reaction to it, and we really don't need anything in our program that requires a detailed explanation to convince someone that there is depth of meaning that is not obvious. I think this revised version is clean, gets to the essence of the point, and will serve us well.

The Sea Promise is an important part of our program, but as William Menninger (author of the original Handbook for Skippers in the 30s) explained, "[the] Sea Promise is a set of instructions which should be observed by anyone on a boat.

It does not replace or parallel the Scout Oath or Law."

We'll update the Sea Scout Manual to reflect this sometime soon, but the official version of the Sea Promise is now:

As a Sea Scout, I promise to do my best:

To guard against water accidents

To know the location and proper use of the lifesaving devices on every boat I board

To be prepared to render aid to those in need

To let those less able come first.

National Commodore's Corner

Commodore's Corner: Summer 2020

This has certainly been an interesting and unprecedented summer for Scouting and Sea Scouting in particular.

We want 108 MORE years!



It would be surprising if you have not heard about BSA's Churchill Plan and the proposals that would have affected Sea Scouts, but at this point, that is behind us and we need not worry about either being moved to Exploring or having the upper age dropped to 18. More on all that at [Scouting Wire](#).

I want to thank everyone who spoke up on behalf of Sea Scouts – especially the youth. Their stories of what this program means to them have certainly renewed my belief in Sea Scouts, and more importantly, have helped many across BSA, including the National Key 3, better understand the significance of what we do.

Now that potentially harmful program changes are off the table, it is time to turn our attention toward growth and retention. Moving us to Exploring probably wouldn't have even been considered if we weren't so small, so, it's time to fix that and stop being small! I know this has been a really difficult year, yet most of you have stuck it out and many ships are thriving. A number of Skipper's have told me that this has been their best recruiting year ever – in large part because they are still running some sort of program, while many of our traditional competitors for the attention of young people (sports, band, etc.)

remain shut down. Inviting a friend to come to a Scout meeting works just as well for virtual meetings as physical ones – especially if that friend is at home, bored, with no social activities. Our National Boatswain has challenged everyone to recruit a friend – please ask your Scouts to support her in that.

Recharter time is coming up soon – please make sure your unit is good to go. Last year we had way too many recharter failures (many due to Council shutdowns and thus not our fault), and these take time and energy to track and correct better spent on starting ships. Please let your Council or Area Commodore know if you need any help with this. We need to retain all our ships! Going forward, we must find a way to start a lot more ships. Sea Scouts has to get back to growth again, or we risk our future. We have developed a growth plan which I would encourage each of you to read, and to help execute. If we can harness the energy and unity of purpose that brought us together to fight the Churchill plan, growth is well within our grasp.

Friedrich Nietzsche said “That which does not kill us makes us stronger.” and I think that is true of Sea Scouts after the recent challenges. We are in many ways stronger than we have been in years – we just need to harness that strength to generate growth. Consider these strengths:

Better visibility to the National Key 3, National Executive Committee and Board than we have had in years and an explicit decision by them for Sea Scouts to continue with current structure for now

Youth leaders thinking and writing and speaking about what our program means to them

Sea Scouts leaders across the country pulling together like never before

Better communication channels than ever before

Solidarity and support from other programs in the BSA who also spoke out for us

Good success in virtual operations from ship level to National events like Seabadge

Broader program opportunities than ever before with the addition of paddlecraft and SCUBA

Solid Sea Scout leadership team at the Area and Regional levels.

Councils so desperate for members that they'll try anything, even Ships!

When you really think about it, we've got a lot to build upon there. We want another 108 years, and if we all pull together, we'll get them!

T.W. Cook – National Commodore

P.S. – Just a couple of quick bonuses

The 2020 update to the Sea Scout manual adds options for SCUBA that will better enable ships whose primary focus is on SCUBA to pursue Sea Scout advancement. Details at [advancement central](#) and as always, you can track any changes of any kind to the Sea Scout program by watching the [program updates](#) page.

We have now conducted two virtual Seabadge courses with good success. If you've avoided Seabadge because of time, distance or cost, you may want to reconsider and look for a Virtual Seabadge course this fall or winter. New courses should appear on the [Seabadge page](#), but you'll need to be quick as they've been filling within a day or two of opening for registration – more are in development and will be published soon.

Western Region's Commodore's Corner

Commodore's Minute

Hello Western Region

I hope everyone is continuing to be safe and well. As we continue to move forward with our new ways of life with Covid19, I remain hopeful that we will be resuming normal operations sometime in the near future. Please continue to follow all the guidelines and policies of your local county and state so we can keep each other as safe as possible.

Our motto for this year is "No Ship Gets Left Behind." As we continue to focus on growth, we need to have an equal focus on retention. We have too many ships that are in the dark with little to no communication with the Area. We are slowly filling the vacant Council Commodore positions throughout the region but this process is slow going. Every Skipper needs to know who their Council and Area Commodores are. The Council and Area Commodores are here to support Skippers with keeping Ships running smoothly, plus help with issues that may be impeding growth and retention. Skippers please reach out before your Ship gets in trouble or to the point of no recovery



There has been a change of watch for WR Area 1: Deidre Baumgarten will now be at the helm as the new WR Area 1 Commodore. Deidre is a long time serving Sea Scouter and Adult Leader with tremendous organization and communication skills that will serve WR Area 1 well. Deidre will be forming her staff and implementing her plan for growth and retention for WR Area 1. Please give Deidre a warm welcome when you see or hear from her. Welcome aboard Deidre!

I want to thank Al Bruce for his many years of service of support and dedication to Sea Scouts. Al has been very steadfast with supporting the Nor'Wester Regatta, SEAL onboard the Propeller, and activities across WR Area 1. Thank you Al!

Jordyn Alexis, past Western Region Boatswain will now be working with the Regional Quarterdeck. Jordyn will be working with the Growth and Retention Committee to help keep track of our number of ships and to help support the Area Commodores with communication with council's that have low ship numbers. Thank you Jordyn for continuing to serve the Region!

I want to say thank you to all the Skippers who have been adaptive with their meetings and training through social media. It's been really great seeing you all broadcast your ships. Without your creativity we wouldn't be staying afloat. Keep up the great work!

This year has been a rough one for us. Please stay strong and dedicated. We will win this fight and come out stronger than ever. Everyone of us matters and everyone of us is the key to success and our future!

Stay strong,

Greg Harden

Western Region Commodore

Western Region's Commodore's Corner

Meet the New WR Area 1 Commodore



Spending her teenage years on the SSS Pathfinder in The Dalles, OR, Deidre Baumgarten joined the adult leadership ranks in 2001 in Northern CA. She was an instrumental part of the Safety @ Sea program in San Francisco for 13 years. She has served at the Western Region Level for several years, and upon moving to Oregon, her daughter became of Sea Scouting age and insisted on starting their own ship, bringing Sea Scouts back to The Dalles, OR, along with the original flagship, the Pathfinder. Her son is now the only youth in The Dalles that is multi-registered in both Scouting and Sea Scouts.

Outside of scouting, Deidre enjoys traveling, getting outdoors, camping, sailing, and kayaking.

Feel free to contact her at: Area1Commodore@gmail.com

Recorded Webinars

Weather: Coast Guard Tech Talks [Coast Guard Tech Talk - Weather](#)

Snorkeling Tips for Sea Scouts [Snorkeling Tips for Sea Scouts](#)

Rules of the Road (Part 1) [Rules of the Road, Part 1](#)

Rules of the Road (Part 2) [Rules of the Road, Part 2](#)

Coast Guard Tech Talk: Celestial Navigation [Coast Guard Tech Talk: Celestial Navigation](#)

Ground Tackle for Sea Scouts [Ground Tackle](#)

Websites

National Venturing

<http://www.scouting.org/venturing.aspx>

National Sea Scout

<http://www.seascout.org/>

Central Region Venturing

<http://www.crventuring.org>

Northeast Region Venturing

<http://nerventuring-bsa.org/>

Southern Region Sea Scout

<http://srventuring-bsa.org/wordpress/>

National Exploring

<http://www.exploring.org/>

Yahoo Groups

Central Region

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/crventuring/>

Northeast Region

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/nerventuring/>

Southern Region

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/srventuring/>

Western Region

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/wrventuring/>

National

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/venturinglist/>



the FORUM

The FORUM is a National cluster concept and a friendly way to help Scouting Leaders exchange ideas and programs among our Troops, Crews, Ships, Posts, Councils, Areas, Regions and National.

The FORUM is shared by Volunteers and Professionals across the country.

“The **FORUM**” has been published monthly since 2003 and is not an official publication of any Council, Area, Region or National. It is the Leaders and Professionals newsletter. Help support our teenage program by sending the FORUM your stories, Newsletters. Council articles, By-Laws, Questions and Best Practices to share with others.

As always, articles, questions and comments are welcome. Promote Venturing, Sea Scouting and Exploring by promoting your Unit and Council. We are seeking support from anyone interested in working on the newsletter .

Thanks for all you do!

Bob the BEAR Monto—Editor in Chief
Bernie Suess - Webmaster

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