

# **Webelos-to-Scout Transition: Bridge to Boy Scouting**

*“A critical step in the journey of Scouting”*

**- PLANNING**

**- PREPARATION**

**- PERFORMANCE**

**- SUCCESS**

*Based on numerous BSA publications and various websites. Presented by Ken Thomas at the Tri-District Cub Scout POW WOW on November 3, 2001 and revised in November 2006 by Bill Blumenthal.*

## **Guide Outline**

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## **I. What is Webelos-to-Scouts Transition ?**

The goal of the Webelos Den Leader is to graduate every Webelos Scout into a troop. The goal of the Scoutmaster is to join and retain every Webelos Scout into the Troop. This is accomplished by following the Webelos-to-Scout Transition plan described in this guide. Use this guide to PLAN, PREPARE, PERFORMANCE, and SUCCEED in the Webelos-to Boy Scout Transition !

BOTH pack and troop leaders must plan months ahead for this transition, then prepare and perform the activities necessary to implement this plan. All the activities are important to achieving success.

### **Why is the Webelos-to-Boy Scout Transition important ?**

- 70-80% of all new Boy Scouts were Webelos first. Therefore, the Webelos Program and transition is of critical importance to maintaining a strong, robust Boy Scouting (and later Venturing) program.
- Many new Boy Scouts drop out during the first year. There are few “second chances”. Keeping them interested requires an exciting program with lots of fun, outdoor activities. Troop Leaders must provide a first-rate, first-year Boy Scouting program. The first summer camp, immediately after Webelos transition, is absolutely critical.
- Boy Scouts who attend summer camp their first year stay in Scouting longer and have better success attaining the rank of Eagle Scout. Therefore, making sure Webelos and parents are familiar with and sign-up for summer camp is an essential part of the transition plan. Making sure new Boy Scouts are well prepared for summer camp is an essential part of retaining boys in the Troop.
- May is “quitting time.” Schools, school sports, and other youth programs often come to an end. Parents and boys get out of programs to which they are not fully committed and are looking for something fun for the summer. If they are not comfortable with the troop, leaders, and troop program, then it is easy not to join or not participate in this new and unfamiliar program with new, unfamiliar leaders. Making parents and boys comfortable with the Troop program and leaders during Webelos Den visits (October-January) and getting them signed-up for summer camp in the Troop is a major part of the transition plan.
- The patrol method (and youth leadership) is a major reason boys (and parents) remain in Scouting. Make sure it is used starting in the Webelos Den.

### **The Transition Plan**

The two basic components of the transition plan are:

- Partnering of Webelos Dens and Boy Scout Troops, and
- Joint Webelos-Boy Scout activities.

The Webelos-to-Scout transition plan is a cooperative effort between the pack and troop that results in more Webelos Scouts joining and staying in Boy Scouting. It gives Webelos Scouts and their families an awareness of the troop program, troop leadership, advancement, and an appreciation of troop organization and relationships. Studies have shown that when the plan is used, a high percentage of Webelos Scouts move into the troop easily and eagerly in a smooth flowing, continuous transition.

The transition plan emphasizes making connections between the fifth-grade Webelos patrol and Boy Scout troops. The Webelos Program, particularly outdoor activities, and the Arrow of Light award are part of the transition plan that also includes the following activities:

- Scoutmasters and Webelos leaders meet by the Fall of the fifth-grade year to get acquainted, share the Webelos roster and Troop calendar, plan transition activities, review summer camp plans and fees, and set dates for a Troop visits and a Webelos parents' camp promotion meeting.
- During October-February of the fifth-grade year, Webelos and their parents visit local troops to observe and participate in meetings, learn about troop activities for Webelos scouts and summer camp plans, meet the troop leaders, and ask questions.
- Second year Webelos choose a patrol name, make a flag, wear patrol medallions and use a patrol leader (the Denner). This eases their transition into the troop and its patrol method.
- The Webelos Den will take part in one or more Boy Scout activities with one or more local troops.
- Webelos graduate in February as a group at a Blue and Gold ceremony (with or without their Arrow of Light award). It is critically important that the boys become fully integrated and engaged into a troop and its activities immediately. Troop Leaders need to include activities specifically geared toward the new scouts and their rapid skill development and advancement.
- The Webelos Leader becomes an Assistant Scoutmaster or Patrol Advisor (with the Troop's approval) for the first year to ease the transition for the new patrol.

### **How the Transition Plan Helps**

The Webelos Program introduces the Webelos Scout to Boy Scout skills and future advancement experiences. He sees boy leadership at work in the troop and senses his own potential as a junior leader. He becomes more confident and enthusiastic about the patrol method, camporees, summer camp, and future high adventure trips. In short, the boy's desire for troop membership is the result of this gradual change in appetite for troop-oriented activities. The plan gives the new Scout time to get to know and be comfortable with older Scouts, so the boy is more willing and excited to go to camp, and better prepared to have a good first experience. Graduation of the whole Den keeps boys together with friends. This is probably the single most important point for the new Scouts.

For the troop leader, it means more boys in the Troop - boys already trained in the Boy Scout joining requirements, and boys whose families have been supporting them in pack activities and are potential new adult Troop leaders. It provides time to get to know boys and parents, and train boys for summer camp.

For the Webelos Den Leader, it means the path to successful completion of his job. It means direct help in advancement and on Webelos overnights, as well as the association with and the potential to become a Troop leader. It also means the satisfaction of promoting a boy's desire to continue in Scouting.

To the Cubmaster it means the active, successful Webelos dens, well-planned graduation ceremonies, better access to Den Chiefs, and lively pack meetings that feature Boy Scout troops as guests.

For parents the plan provides time to "plug in" to Boy Scouting. The plan emphasis is: This is the same program with the same, familiar leaders but now with a new program emphasis. Boy Scouting means outdoor fun and adventure, and preparing for camp. The plan gives parents time to get to know troop leaders before they send their son, who perhaps has never been away from home before, to summer camp.

## II. KEY LEADERS

### Leaders in the Webelos-to-Scout Transition Plan

Each of the leaders in the plan has an important role to play in getting Webelos Scouts into a troop. Key leaders in the plan are the:

- **Webelos Den Leader and Assistant Webelos Den Leader**
- **Cubmaster**
- **Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmaster(s)**
- **Webelos Den Chief**
- **Unit Commissioners/District Committees**

### Webelos Leaders

These leaders are the most influential in the boys' preparation for Boy Scouts. Webelos leaders should be fully trained: Youth Protection training (YPT) and New Leader Essentials (NLE) within their first year and Webelos Den Leader-specific training by the end of the boys' Bear year in Cubs Scouts. They should then continue with Basic Adult Leader Outdoor Orientation (BALOO) and/or Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills (IOLS) while a 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Webelos leader and Scoutmaster/Assistant Scoutmaster-specific training prior to the transition. The Webelos Den leader and Assistant Webelos Den Leader:

- Has the Webelos Den function as a patrol, particularly in the fifth-grade year.
- Has boys attend "Webelos Week in the Woods" camp, ideally between fourth and fifth grade.
- Makes it a goal that every Webelos Scout achieves the Arrow of Light (AOL) award.
- Teaches and verifies Boy Scout skills needed to earn the AOL and to join a Troop.
- Attends Roundtables to learn practical scouting knowledge, skills, and to get to know Troop leaders.
- Recruits a Den Chief to help teach Boy Scout skills and act as a positive Boy Scout role model.
- Plans a year-round, two-year program to complete AOL requirements, including an outdoor program with camping and joint-Troop activities.
- Plans the Webelos graduation ceremony with Pack and Troop leaders and the Order of the Arrow.
- Provides parents and scouts with summer camp information and promotes Troop summer camp.
- Assists Webelos with completing and turning in the Boy Scout application form and fees.
- Follows up with Webelos who do not join a Troop. Determines if the problem can be corrected.

### Cubmaster

- Encourages and supports the achievement of the Arrow of Light by every graduating Webelos Scout.
- Encourages prospective Webelos leaders to obtain training early including attending Roundtable.
- Is knowledgeable of Boy Scout troops in the area and maintains points-of-contact with each Troop.
- Encourages visits by Webelos Dens to troop meetings and Troop Leaders to Pack meetings.
- Coordinates graduation plans (usually as part of the Blue and Gold Banquet) and invites Troop Leaders (SMs, ASMs, SPLs, CC), District Leaders, and the Order of the Arrow to participate in a memorable Webelos graduation/cross-over ceremony. If possible, the Pack presents Webelos with a graduation gift (Scout Handbook, Boy Scout neckerchief slide, etc.).

### Scoutmaster

- Contacts Webelos Leaders to determine the number of transitioning Webelos and includes ample space for them in summer camp reservations.
- Contacts Webelos Leaders and invites Webelos Dens and their parents to attend troop meetings.
- Contacts Cubmaster to make a presentation of the Troop and its activities at a Pack meeting.
- Contacts Webelos and Cubmaster to plan and participate in a graduation/cross-over ceremony. Encourages Boy Scouts to participate in the Order of the Arrow-led graduation ceremony.
- Assists in finding qualified Den Chiefs from his Troop for Webelos Den Leaders.

- Attends Roundtables to share scouting knowledge and to get to know Webelos and Pack leaders.
- Plans a year-round program that includes joint Webelos-Troop activities needed to complete AOL requirements, including camping, and a 1<sup>st</sup>-year program geared towards new scout advancement.
- Ensures registration forms (new scout and adult leader) are properly completed and forwarded along with fees to the council office in a timely manner.
- Invites the Webelos Den Leader to become a Troop leader and to work with the new Patrol initially.
- Provides Webelos Leaders with Troop summer camp information (dates, location, fees) and Troop calendars to share with scouts and parents as soon as these are available.
- During Troop visits, or prior to graduation, discusses summer camp and troop activities with Webelos' parents and scouts. Follow-up with parent orientations at Troop or committee meetings.

### **The Assistant Scoutmaster(s)**

- Greets and assists Webelos Leaders, Webelos, and their parents during troop meeting visits.
- Assists Scoutmaster (SM) to make presentations of the Troop and its activities at Pack meetings.
- Assists SM in preparing information about Troop activities and summer camp for the Webelos.
- Assists SM and Pack leaders to plan and implement Webelos graduation/cross-over ceremonies.
- Helps to form the new scout patrol(s) composed of either all new scouts or including selected older scouts as leaders and role models. Remember that boys often join and remain in scouting because their friends do. Keep friends and Dens together.
- Makes sure the Webelos feel welcome, are an important part of, and belong in the Troop. Keeps an eye out for conflicts between new and older scouts and resolves these quickly in a positive manner.
- Works with the Troop Guide (Boy leader) and other Troop leaders to plan and implement instruction of scout skills and the patrol method.
- Plans camping activities geared toward new scouts (and parents) with little outdoor experience.
- Promotes rapid advancement through the First Class rank within the first year in the Troop.
- Verifies and reinforces the basic scout skills and knowledge at Patrol and Troop meetings, camp-outs, and camporees.

### **Webelos Den Chief**

- A resource for teaching scout skills.
- Sets a good Boy Scout example. Needs to be well-qualified (usually at least First class in rank).
- Helps teach the patrol method and instill strong patrol spirit.
- Helps the Webelos Den Leader to operate the Webelos patrol.
- Assists in the Arrow of Light and graduation ceremonies (OA participation is desirable).
- Counts as a leadership position for his Boy Scout advancement requirements (Star, Life, and Eagle).

### **Unit Commissioners/District Committee**

- If necessary, promotes augmenting Troops that need more Scouts.
- With the District Executive, starts new Troops to accommodate transitioning Webelos if needed.
- Assists Webelos graduation planning, if necessary, and the use of the OA to conduct ceremonies.
- Tracks graduating Webelos Scouts to ensure they become registered as Boy Scouts
- Encourages new Troop parents to become adult leaders.
- Attend graduations when invited as a District representative. Share in the fun and excitement !
- When Webelos do not join a Troop, attempt to determine the reason(s). If these are financial, assist with OA campership grants for summer camp and negotiate with Troop leaders to reduce fees and/or provide a donated uniform. Follow-up to correct other reasons and invite to re-join Scouting.

### III. THE WEBELOS PROGRAM

The Webelos Program is nominally a 2 year, year-round program. It is important for a new Webelos Leader to realize this and plan accordingly. Ideally, the Webelos den will begin to function in June after the third-grade year when boys may attend the Webelos resident camp (Webelos-Week-in-the-Woods) and will end with the graduation and Arrow of Light ceremonies taking place in February of the fifth-grade year.

Overall, the entire Webelos Program is a transition between Cub Scouts and Boys Scouts. As a Cub, the boy had to show his parents that he did his best. In Webelos, he now has to convince the Webelos Leader that he has done his best. Webelos Leaders start emphasizing outdoors and camping, but still follow the Cub Scout rules. The idea is to acquaint the boys to the outdoors in a friendly and hospitable way, starting with the development of skills they will need to fine-tune in Boy Scouts.

The Webelos den is still a Cub Scout den, but may use a patrol patch for identification. Either the blue or the khaki uniform is permissible (decided by the boy's parents). Rotate the Denner position (similar to the Boy Scout Patrol Leader) regularly. Give the Denner/Patrol Leader some responsibilities and assignments to make this position meaningful to the boys.

Activity Badges are designed to be similar to Boy Scout merit badges. Use expertise from your parents and from outside the den; the Webelos Den Leader should not try to lead all Activity Badge instruction. The Webelos Den Leader now decides if the boy has *done his best* to meet the requirements.

To complete all the activity badges, it is necessary to get started in June after the third grade. Many badges can be completed in one month, but several will take two months and perhaps require some take-home work. In the Webelos Program Helps, two activity badges are listed for each month. The first is intended for Fourth-Grade Webelos and the second is intended for Fifth-Grade Webelos. Some leaders try to do two badges in a month, but you can't do justice to the requirements with this arrangement (and what does that teach the boys!). If you don't get started early, or if you have boys joining late, you will need to modify the schedule and, perhaps, drop some activity badges. Pay particular attention to the required badges for the Webelos Badge (Fitness and Citizen) and Arrow of Light Award (Readyman and Outdoorsman).

The Arrow of Light Award is designed to aid in the Webelos to Scout Transition. Key requirements for the Arrow of Light involve participating in a Boy Scout outdoor activities and a Troop meeting. Begin planning to meet these requirements as the boys start the fifth grade year. It may be difficult to set up an outdoor activity with Boy Scout Troops in mid-winter, so this is typically the most difficult requirement to schedule.

The Webelos Den Chief is a Boy Scout who serves as an assistant to the Webelos Den Leader. He is the Webelos Leader's link with a Boy Scout troop. Use him as an example Boy Scout. Have him talk often with the Webelos about what he likes in Boy Scouts. Make sure that the Den Chief understands that he is your backup leader and not "one of the boys." Give him specific assignments to handle during the den meetings.

Prepare the boys for the outdoors. Build as much outdoors into the activity badges as possible. Begin their camping experience with Webelos den camping and then take advantage of the Great Southwest Council Webelos resident summer camping program at Camp Frank Rand (Webelos-Week-in-the-Woods).

## IV. WEBELOS OUTDOORS

This Chapter is intended to give you a few pointers about the Webelos Program with an emphasis on outdoors activities. All prospective Webelos leaders should plan to take Webelos Den Leader-specific Training and the separately offered Basic Adult Leader Outdoor Orientation (BALOO) and/or Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills (IOLS) Training, ideally while the boys are still in third grade. Cub Leader Training is offered several times throughout the year by the District – visit the Northern New Mexico (NNM) District website regularly (<http://www.losalamos.com/bsa/>), join the NNM District e-mail list (<http://www.losalamos.com/bsa/maillinglist.asp>), ask your Cubmaster, or look for the Great Southwest Council quarterly newsletter for training calendar dates. BALOO is usually offered by the Tri-District training committees in conjunction with Boy Scout Leader IOLS training, in the spring and the fall. Remember that a goal of Cub Scouts is to prepare boys to become Boy Scouts. The Webelos Program is designed to complete this transition.

### Camping in Cub Scouts

Family camping is recommended in Cub Scouts. This means that the boys should be encouraged to camp with their own families to develop some initial camping skills and to become use to being in the outdoors. The Pack and the Webelos Dens are permitted to hold campouts, but with the provision that each Cub is accompanied by a parent/guardian or parent/guardian-designated adult. The Webelos Den Leader and other Pack Leaders *cannot* be responsible for youth on overnight Cub Scout activities.

Webelos are also encouraged to patrol camp, but with accompanied parent involvement. Do not attempt backpacking; go car camping in easily accessible locations.

Fourth Grade - usually parent-son camping with emphasis on campsite preparation, cooking and cleaning. Emphasize camping skills and nature/outdoors activities.

Fifth Grade - while a parent is still required to accompany each boy, you can start to emphasize patrol-style camping. Boys should start to work as a group to prepare campsites and do the cooking/cleaning with guidance from adults. Rotate job assignments (fire starting, preparation, cooking, cleaning)

Boy Scout Troop Camping - often a fifth grade Webelos Den will participate with a Boy Scout Troop in an overnight camping experience. This still requires parent-son camping if it is done as a Webelos activity. Work with the Scoutmaster and ASMs to make it simple and easy to do.

Day Camp - Sometimes a special Webelos Day Camp with an overnighter is available. The NNM district organizes its own Day Camps in Los Alamos and Espanola.

Council-sponsored resident summer camp. Take advantage of programs offered at Camp Frank Rand (Chimayo Scout Reservation). Note that this is the only approved Cub Scout camping activity in which the parent-son rule may be waived. Reservations usually beginning in December and fill-up fast. See the GSWC website (<http://gswcbsa.org/summercamp/cub/index.shtml>) for more information. A range of camping programs are offered during the summer:

- Akela's Rendezvous Family Weekend - usually for younger Cubs; parent-son camping.
- Adventure Camp – for all Cubs, including Webelos; focused on Wolves and Bears.
- Webelos Week in the Woods - for Webelos Dens; with early planning, boys could attend after both the third grade and the fourth grade. It is highly recommended that all Webelos plan to attend camp after their fourth grade year.

### Webelos Outdoor Activities

Webelos dens should do as many activities outdoors as possible. Try to hold your regular meetings outside. An outdoor activity each month is ideal. Obviously, the amount you do outdoors will be dependant on weather, regular meeting times and days, etc. Plan many hikes, particularly for the outdoors-related activity badges. Avoid backpacking, and adhere to the parent-son camping rule. This

is to make the outdoor and camping experience the most pleasurable for the boys. Doing it on their own, and meeting the challenge of hauling heavy packs should wait until Boy Scouts, when they are stronger and more capable.

Plan some activity badge requirements into your hikes. Visit parks, old mining areas, even just local trails. Ask the boys:

“How many different trees can we find?”

“Are there any orange birds in these woods?”

“How can we show people at home this elk print?”

“If these three minerals (quartz, feldspar, mica) are mixed together, what rock would we find (granite)?”

Camping should be “car camping;” that is, camp in an area easily accessible by car. In this way, more time can be spent on activities rather than packing in. In addition, most boys will have gear that is not appropriate for packing in to a campsite - bulky sleeping bags, family tents, kitchen pots and pans. Cooking should be on open fires, where possible. Practice “leave no trace” camping.

There is absolutely nothing wrong with “fair weather” camping with Webelos; we want them to have a pleasant and enjoyable experience. Winter outings (such as skiing) should be limited to daytime (unless you have an indoor heated space for sleeping); be sure, as the leader, to bring lots of extra warm clothing, hats, gloves, even boots! Organize extra adults to prepare hot drinks for the boys. Be sure to have the boys bring a set of dry clothes to change into for the ride home.

## **Outdoor Skills**

Many of the following skills are covered in detail in the BALOO/IOLS courses. Some key issues are highlighted below:

Cooking/Fuels/Fire building - see BSA Fuels policy. Webelos should never handle liquid fuels.

Adults should supervise solid or gas fuel use. Minimal supervision is needed for cooking on an open fire, so plan to use wood or charcoal fires for cooking, as much as possible. Fires are FUN! Take your own wood or charcoal to save the forest! Teach the boys how to build fires - for cooking, for light, for heat, etc. Make fire starters at a Den meeting.

Cooking/Food - simple is better. Foil-pack dinners are the norm. Cook away from sleeping areas and latrines. Use this as an opportunity to demonstrate utensil-less cooking (egg in an orange cup, pigs in a blanket on a stick). Have the boys plan the menu at den meetings, and have them help buy the food; these are some of the Boy Scout advancement requirements they will do when they are older. Try Dutch oven cooking.

Site selection - away from water, relatively flat with drainage, and free from rocks. Try to avoid damaging the soils and grasses.

Tents - you will probably be using family tents - large and heavy. Teach the use of a tarp for shelter (a tent is not needed).

Sleeping - the boys will probably have cotton rectangular bags, if anything. Teach the use of bedrolls or “envelope” beds. Don’t make families buy expensive sleeping bags (yet)!

First Aid - you should have Basic First Aid and CPR training. Have a Den kit for your use - bandages, antibiotic cream, anti-itch creams, antiseptic, soap, moleskin or Second Skin. Get the boys in the habit of packing a personal First Aid kit (Readyman).

Cleaning and sanitation - teach proper woods toilet practice. Go away from water, cooking areas, camping areas. Carry a plastic trowel to dig shallow holes for individual use. Teach patrol cleanup methods; use bleach solution (kept by the leader and used only under his/her direction) for the final rinse. Leave the area cleaner than you found it!

Woods tools - set up a “lumber yard.” Adult supervision is mandatory! It is recommended that

you only demonstrate an ax and let them use a hatchet! There is rarely a need for an ax in Cub Scout or Boy Scout camping. Better yet, teach and use a camping bow saw.

Knots and rope - learn the basics and practice them often - square, clove hitch, two half-hitches, bowline, taughtline hitch. Make rope during a Den meeting or on an outing (one when they will use the rope). Make games out of knot tying. Have the boys pitch a tarp as a shelter using several of the knots they have been taught. Practical examples help them remember.

Map and Compass - get the boys use to taking a compass on hikes and finding North. Show them ways to use the sun and stars, rather than a compass. Introduce them to reading maps, particularly topographical maps. BSA sells an orienteering game that can be run with a Den. Have the boys plan a hike using a map, then use the map and compass to find the route.

### **Activity Badges**

Geologist - Harding Mine, out of Dixon (get UNM Earth and Planetary Sciences Dept. permission; [http://epswww.unm.edu/harding/harding\\_.htm](http://epswww.unm.edu/harding/harding_.htm)). Similar minerals and rocks can be found along the road to, and within, Camp Rand. Battleship Rock in Jemez and road cuts north of Storrie Lake for marine fossils.

Naturalist - Basque del Apache in Nov - Feb. to see the birds. Seven Springs fish hatchery. Collect insects on a hike or in a local park during a Den meeting.

Outdoorsman - demonstrate, and have the boys practice, packing for a trip. Get a Boy Scout to demonstrate packing a backpack.

Forester - visit a local lumber yard to get samples of different woods. Don't cut live trees in the forest for this! Collect leaf and bark specimens on a hike (dead, not pulled or cut off).

Readyman - get basic First Aid before going into the woods.

### **Planning Campouts**

Always plan the outings ahead of time. If you don't have something planned, the boys will plan something on their own - like stick fighting over a gully! Use den meetings to involve the boys in planning. Be prepared to use every opportunity on an outing as a learning experience. Use various aids such as:

- Local Tour Permit (required!)
- Campout Planning guides
- Campfire Planning Worksheet

## **V. ARROW OF LIGHT AWARD**

**(Based on Current Requirements - 2003 Handbooks)**

The Arrow of Light (AOL) award helps Webelos transition to Boy Scouts. *However, you, the leader, have to plan ahead!!!*

Key AOL Requirements: With the Webelos Den, visit

- one Boy Scout troop meeting, and
- one Boy Scout-oriented outdoor activity.

Establish contact with troops early to schedule attending troop meetings. Ask your Cubmaster, Unit Commissioner, Scout Executive, other Scouters for help. Parents and boys should attend the troop meetings.

Plan joint activities with the troop(s). This can often be the most difficult to arrange. If you wait until mid-winter, you may not find an appropriate activity for Webelos participation. If you take part in a joint campout, remember the requirement for adult-son participation.

Other AOL requirements include some of the Boy Scout “joining” requirements: oath, law, motto, square knot, etc.

Joining a troop should occur by March of fifth grade. The Troop needs to make plans for you to attend summer camp. It is highly recommended that new Scouts participate in the first year camping program at summer camp. The new Scout needs to meet and become familiar with the other boys and prepare before going to summer camp.

The goal is to complete these requirements before graduation, and to get the boys firmly established in a troop before the troop goes to summer camp.

The Arrow of Light Award Ceremony equates to the Eagle ceremony for Boy Scouts. Ensure that the AOL ceremony is just as memorable. An impressive ceremony will instill in the boys the desire to continue in Boy Scouting.

## **VI. PICKING A BOY SCOUT TROOP**

### **The Aims of Scouting**

There are three aims of Boy Scouts. These are to build character, to foster citizenship, and to develop fitness. The ideals of Scouting are stated in the Scout Oath and the Scout Law. These aims and ideals are accomplished through a program that involves patrols, outdoor activities, advancement, personal growth, and leadership development. Each troop has its own "flavor" or mix of these methods. Your job is to find the correct mix for you!

### **Questions for Webelos Scouts to ask themselves:**

1. What do I want to get out of Boy Scouts?
2. What is important to me about any group that I belong to?
3. Do I want to be an Eagle Scout?
4. Do I like to camp, hike, backpack?
5. Do I like to try different activities; would I like to work on merit badges?

### **What to look for when visiting a Troop:**

1. Are the meetings lead by the boys?  
Boy Scout troops are supposed to be lead by older boys in the troop. The leaders have advanced in rank, have shown interest in being a leader, and have been trained in their duties. Is the troop organized into patrols (groups of about 8 boys)? How are patrol leaders selected? Watch how the older boys behave toward the younger boys; are they mentors and leaders?
2. What role does the Scoutmaster play ?  
The Scoutmaster should provide guidance to the senior patrol leader, who is the troop meeting leader. The Scoutmaster is not supposed to run everything himself. If the meeting is run only by the Scoutmaster, then the boys may not have much of a chance to develop leadership skills.
3. Are there Assistant Scoutmasters assisting ?  
There should be several of these adult leaders. They will work with the boys, as well as help the Scoutmaster. Several leaders together provide some variety in the Troop. One Assistant Scoutmaster should be dedicated to helping new boys join the troop and begin their advancements. Other adults will work with senior patrol leaders, older boys, or help the scouts with planning.
4. Are parents supportive or is everything left to the adult leaders?  
A strong troop will have lots of parent involvement. Find out about the Troop Committee.

Do these adults attend the troop meetings? What "jobs" do these people do? Parents, ask how you can help on the committee.

5. Is there a "New Scout" patrol?

If so, this probably means the troop puts an emphasis on the transition of younger boys into the scouting program. If there isn't such a patrol, ask how new boys fit in and if there is anyone that helps them become part of the Troop.

6. What are the troop's interests?

Boy Scouting should be a mix of outdoor activities (hiking, camping, other activities), advancement (merit badges, advancement in rank), and community involvement (community service, participation in District and Council Scout activities, participation in community activities). Try to learn the amount of each of these in the mix for each troop and find one that matches your interests. Try to see how these are used to develop character, self confidence, and leadership. Some troops may "specialize" in some activity; if so, don't join a troop that has a primary activity you don't like. Some troops may put total emphasis on attaining the Eagle rank and ignore the outdoor activities. Others put total emphasis on backpacking or camping while ignoring service, community involvement, and advancement. Whatever the troop's interests, it should be FUN for the boys and match your interests.

7. What does the Troop do during the summer?

Summer camp is a BIG part of the scouting experience. This is a time to further develop camaraderie with the other boys, work on merit badges, test some of your newly developed skills, and have a great time. There are many different summer activities available to Boys Scouts. Most troops attend a traditional resident camp each summer and most camps have a "First Year Camper" program. It is best to sign-up early to be able to attend summer camp with the troop. Older scouts participate in "high adventure" activities such as canoe trips, sailing, and hiking at Philmont. The lure of these experiences can keep boys active longer, so ask if the Troop about these activities.

8. How do the boys behave?

Do the boys show respect to the adult leaders, the patrol leaders, and each other? Do they come to order when it is time to start the meeting? Do they participate in the activities, both at the troop meeting and at other events?

## VII. WEBELOS GRADUATION

Goodbye from the Pack! ... Welcome to the Troop!

Every Webelos Scout should be recognized with a graduation ceremony before leaving the pack and entering a troop. This is not likely to happen, however, unless you have a plan of cooperation developed by your pack and the troop or troops that work with you. This plan should be the result of a joint meeting of the pack and the troop committees or of your Webelos den leader and the Scoutmaster. The ceremony should include, in addition to the Webelos den leader and Den Chief, the graduate's prospective Scoutmaster, his new patrol leader, and his parents. The emphasis in this ceremony should not be merely to graduate the boy out of the pack, but to *graduate the whole family into the troop*.

Note that we are really dealing with two ceremonies. One is the Arrow of Light Award Ceremony. This does not need to involve Boy Scout troop members. It is the highest award in Cub Scouts and deserves a fitting ceremony like the Eagle Award has in Boy Scouts. Upon completion of the Arrow of Light Award, a fifth-grade boy may join Boy Scouts. The other ceremony is the graduation out of Cub Scouts and into a troop. This should *require* troop participation.

If all of the boys will receive the Arrow of Light and graduate into a troop, then the ceremonies could be performed at the same meeting. For many packs, doing an AOL ceremony in conjunction with all the other

graduation ceremonies makes for a very long pack meeting; so, often the two ceremonies are separated. Many Packs like to do the graduation and/or AOL ceremony at the February Blue and Gold Banquet. If your Pack does this, you will need to plan carefully to complete all the requirements for Webelos and for AOL in time!

## VIII. RESOURCES and FURTHER INFORMATION

### Suggestions for Webelos Graduation and Crossover Ceremonies

- From the Cub Scout Ceremonies Book by Ellen DeVilbiss, as rendered by the MacScouter ([www.macscouter.com/ceremony/CubScoutCeremonies.html](http://www.macscouter.com/ceremony/CubScoutCeremonies.html)).
  - From the NetWoods Virtual Campsite (<http://www.netwoods.com/d-ceremony.html>).
  - From the United States Scouting Service Project (<http://usscouts.org/usscouts/ceremony/aol.html>)
- Also, check out local POW WOW books and the BSA book *Staging Den and Pack Ceremonies*.

### Other World-Wide-Web Resources

Webelos Leaders Guide (8/1996): <http://usscouts.org/cubscouts/cswlg.html>  
The Virtual Cub Leader's Handbook: <http://www.geocities.com/~pack215/home.html>  
Guide to Safe Scouting, Chapter 3 Camping: <http://www.scouting.org/pubs/gss/gss03.html>  
Northern New Mexico District Website: [www.losalamos.com/bsa/](http://www.losalamos.com/bsa/)  
Great Southwest Council website: [www.gswcbsa.org/](http://www.gswcbsa.org/)  
Official BSA website: [www.scouting.org](http://www.scouting.org)

### Training

Cub Leader Fast Start ([www.scouting.org/cubscouts/faststart/](http://www.scouting.org/cubscouts/faststart/))  
New Leader Essentials (NLE)  
Cub Scout Leader-specific Training – see section on Webelos Den Leader training  
Basic Adult Leader Outdoor Orientation (BALOO) - for Pack camping  
Boy Scout Leader-specific Training (session on Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmaster)  
Boy Scout Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills (IOLS)  
Wood Badge  
Basic First Aid and CPR (from Red Cross, National Safety Council, etc.)  
Contact your District Training Chairman or your District Executive (Chris Pearson) for further information.

### Printed Materials

Guide to Safe Scouting (also at [www.scouting.org/pubs/gss/toc/html](http://www.scouting.org/pubs/gss/toc/html))  
Webelos Handbook  
Cub Scout Leader Book  
Cub Scout Leader How-To Book  
Webelos Activity Book  
Cub Scout and Webelos Scout Program Helps  
Webelos to Scout Transition pamphlet  
Boy Scout Handbook  
Scoutmaster's Handbook  
Boy Scout Field Guide  
Troop Program Resources and Troop Program Features books  
Boy Scout Merit Badge Books  
Philmont Field Guide