

# Youth Protection Training Update

As of September 1, 2017, Youth Protection Training is required for all adult leaders at the time of registration. Paper applications from new leaders must be accompanied by a Youth Protection Training completion certificate, which must be filed with the application.

Because completion of YPT is now required for all leaders at the time of registration, unit leaders must obtain copies of the completion certificates from the leaders who register online before approving their application.

With the upcoming renewal cycle, the Internet Rechartering system will be updated so that units cannot submit the registration renewal of any adult who does not have current YPT as of the effective date of the renewal. Completion of YPT as part of the online registration system will be required in a future update. Additionally, council registrars will no longer be able to override the registration system to register any leader whose Youth Protection Training is not current.

Effective for the 2018 BSA summer camp season, any adult accompanying a Boy Scout troop to a residence camp or other Scouting activity lasting 72 hours or more must be registered as a leader, including completion of a CBC and YPT, even if they are the parent of a youth on the trip.

Please Note: Although YPT is strongly encouraged for adults attending any overnight activity, at this time, the requirement applies only to individual adults staying three or more nights at a resident camp.

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# 2017 National Membership Fee Increase

The mission of the Boy Scouts of America is to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Scout Law.

To do this – while delivering the nation’s foremost youth development program – the BSA must remain vigilant in controlling costs. Although we have been successful in reducing our expenditures in many areas, it has become necessary to evaluate our annual membership fees.

Based on feedback from both volunteers and employees, the BSA membership fee will increase to \$33 for all registered youth and adult leaders, effective **December 1, 2017**.

Membership fees support the services that are necessary to provide Scouting to youth from 7 to 21 years of age. From education to high-adventure experiences you can’t get anywhere else, the BSA provides unique growth opportunities at a great value.

Services include primary liability coverage for all volunteer leaders and chartered organizations, ongoing advances in technology, fundraising support, new program development and membership recruiting strategies, and support materials. In 2016 alone, the BSA served 2.3 million youth members through approximately 270 local councils across the United States and its territories.

With the help of all of our volunteers and Scouting parents, we will continue accomplishing incredible things for young

people and the communities we serve.

## **Questions and Answers:**

### **1. Why are you increasing the membership fee? What is the additional money from the fees going to be used for?**

To deliver the Scouting program to our 2.3 million youth members, it is occasionally necessary for the organization to increase membership fees to offset rising costs. As a result, the BSA is increasing our membership fee to \$33 for all registered Scouts and adult members effective December 1, 2017.

Membership fees support the services that are necessary to provide Scouting programs to a growing number of youth. Services include ongoing advances in technology, council visits to assist in fundraising, program development and membership campaigns, liability insurance costs, and administrative costs. It is important that we continue to maintain a strong financial position in the future to support and grow Scouting.

### **2. What is directly contributing to the need for this increase?**

There are a variety of factors taken into consideration, all of which have led to an increased cost of doing business.

### **3. When will the increase go into effect?**

The membership fee change for all registered youth and adult leaders will go into effect December 1, 2017. This change will affect Cub Scout packs, Boy Scout troops, Venturing crews, Sea Scout ships, and Exploring posts/clubs. However, it will NOT apply to LDS-sponsored units, nor to those units with council-paid memberships. Note: All November and December 2017 recharterers will have to renew at this new rate (since November

recharter renewal actually spans from December 1, 2017, to November 30, 2018).

#### **4. Does the BSA increase membership fees often?**

There have been 10 fee increases in the organization's history. Since 1969, the BSA has increased our fee, on average, every five years. The last membership increase took effect on January 1, 2014, and, prior to that, in 2010.

#### **5. How much does it cost to be a Boy Scout?**

All youth and adults who wish to become a member or leader of the Boy Scouts of America must pay the annual membership fee. Beyond that, families incur additional costs related to uniforms and the activities of their individual units.

#### **6. Will the fee for Cub Scouts, Exploring, and Venturing/Sea Scouts increase as well?**

Yes. This change will affect Cub Scout packs, Boy Scout troops, Venturing crews, Sea Scout ships, and Exploring posts/clubs. However, it will NOT apply to LDS-sponsored units, nor to those units with council-paid memberships.

#### **7. Who gets the membership fee?**

Local councils collect – and forward to the National Council – membership fees from each youth and adult who wishes to become a member of the Boy Scouts of America.

#### **8. How is the National Council funded?**

The National Council is funded through membership and service fees, investments, *Boys' Life* magazine subscriptions, sales of uniforms and equipment, fees from national high-adventure bases, and contributions from individuals.

#### **9. What does the National Council do for Scouting on the local level?**

The BSA's National Council provides program materials and support for approximately 270 local councils that administer the Scouting program, with each covering a specific geographic territory. The following are the key functions of the National Council:

- Provide training to local council volunteers and staff
- Maintain a national training center at Philmont Scout Ranch
- Develop and maintain four year-round national high-adventure bases and execute national events (jamborees, National Eagle Scout Association and Order of the Arrow conferences, and National Council meetings)
- Continue our leadership role in protecting our youth by providing youth protection resources, training, and criminal background checks for all registered volunteers and staff
- Provide local councils with program as well as tools for camp and office planning and evaluation, extensive financial counseling, planned giving and fundraising information, and professional personnel support
- Coordinate a communications network through magazines and literature (handbooks, merit badge pamphlets, brochures, training materials, and professional development training), including providing *Scouting* magazine to all registered leaders
- Make available uniforms, equipment, and program supplies
- Maintain and develop new relationships with chartered organizations that use the Scouting program (religious institutions, civic organizations, labor unions, professional organizations, business, and industry)
- Serve in a leadership role with Scouting associations in other countries as a member of the World Scout Conference
- Set and maintain program standards (e.g., advancement, health and safety, etc.) to ensure consistency of the brand throughout councils across the country

## **10. With the increase in membership fees, is Scouting still a good value?**

The BSA has always taken into consideration the cost of delivering the Scouting program and has worked to keep our fees reasonable.

When you compare the BSA to other youth-serving organizations, we provide unique growth opportunities at a great value. The following are costs associated with other youth activities:

- Tackle football, \$142: In Plano, Texas, second- through sixth-graders who play tackle football pay \$140 for a three-month season. That fee doesn't include equipment.
- Youth orchestra, \$1,000: Members of the prestigious Los Angeles Youth Orchestra pay \$100 to audition, \$1,000 annually (if accepted), and must buy their own instruments.
- Select soccer, \$400: In Cleveland, select youth soccer players ages 15 to 18 pay \$400 a season, plus \$180 for uniforms.
- Youth basketball, \$525: In Queens, N.Y., boys ages 8 to 13 pay \$525 a year, not including uniforms.
- 4-H program, \$25: Participants of the 4-H program in College Station, Texas, pay \$25 a year, not including fees for individual activities.

From education to high-adventure, the Boy Scouts of America provides unique growth opportunities at a great value and we want all eligible youth to receive these benefits and participate in Scouting

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# Mayflower Council Program Activity Fee

2018 will be the first full year our new Mayflower Council will be operating as its own council. We've had a very successful summer at both Camp Squanto and Camp Resolute and with those big efforts behind us the staff and board are working diligently to put together a new and unified program year.

Mayflower Fee Change Memo

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## The BSA Expands Programs to Welcome Girls

Today, the Boy Scouts of America Board of Directors unanimously approved to welcome girls into its iconic Cub Scout program and to deliver a Scouting program for older girls that will enable them to advance and earn the highest rank of Eagle Scout. The historic decision comes after years of receiving requests from families and girls, the organization evaluated the results of numerous research efforts, gaining input from current members and leaders, as well as parents and girls who've never been involved in Scouting – to understand how to offer families an important additional choice in meeting the character development needs of all their children.

“This decision is true to the BSA’s mission and core values outlined in the Scout Oath and Law. The values of Scouting –

trustworthy, loyal, helpful, kind, brave and reverent, for example – are important for both young men and women,” said Michael Surbaugh, the BSA’s Chief Scout Executive. “We believe it is critical to evolve how our programs meet the needs of families interested in positive and lifelong experiences for their children. We strive to bring what our organization does best – developing character and leadership for young people – to as many families and youth as possible as we help shape the next generation of leaders.”

Families today are busier and more diverse than ever. Most are dual-earners and there are more single-parent households than ever before [1], making convenient programs that serve the whole family more appealing. Additionally, many groups currently underserved by Scouting, including the Hispanic and Asian communities, prefer to participate in activities as a family. Recent surveys [2] of parents not involved with Scouting showed high interest in getting their daughters signed up for programs like Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts, with 90 percent expressing interest in a program like Cub Scouts and 87 percent expressing interest in a program like Boy Scouts.

Education experts also evaluated the curriculum and content and confirmed relevancy of the program for young women.

“The BSA’s record of producing leaders with high character and integrity is amazing” said Randall Stephenson, BSA’s national board chairman. “I’ve seen nothing that develops leadership skills and discipline like this organization. It is time to make these outstanding leadership development programs available to girls.”

Starting in the 2018 program year, families can choose to sign up their sons and daughters for Cub Scouts. Existing packs may choose to establish a new girl pack, establish a pack that consists of girl dens and boy dens or remain an all-boy pack. Cub Scout dens will be single-gender – all boys or all girls. Using the same curriculum as the Boy Scouts program, the organization will also deliver a program for older girls,

which will be announced in 2018 and projected to be available in 2019, that will enable them to earn the Eagle Scout rank. This unique approach allows the organization to maintain the integrity of the single gender model while also meeting the needs of today's families.

This decision expands the programs that the Boy Scouts of America offers for both boys and girls. Although known for its iconic programs for boys, the BSA has offered co-ed programs since 1971 through Exploring and the Venturing program, which celebrates its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2018. The STEM Scout pilot program is also available for both boys and girls.

For more information about the expanded opportunities for family Scouting, please visit the family Scouting page.

### **About the Boy Scouts of America**

The Boy Scouts of America provides the nation's foremost youth program of character development and values-based leadership training, which helps young people be "Prepared. For Life.®" The Scouting organization is composed of nearly 2.3 million youth members between the ages of 7 and 21 and approximately 960,000 volunteers in local councils throughout the United States and its territories. For more information on the Boy Scouts of America, please visit [www.scouting.org](http://www.scouting.org).

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# **Service Center Closure – Oct 9, 2017**

The Council Service Center will be closed on Monday, October 9, for the Columbus Day holiday.

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## **Cub Scout Leader Position-Specific Training**

Attention all Den Leaders and Pack Leaders! You're about to start a new year with your Cubs, and you deserve to get the tools and resources to make your program fun and successful. That's why we invite you to kick off the program year with Cub Leader-Specific Training!

### **Online Training**

You can take position-specific training online by signing into your account at [my.scouting.org](http://my.scouting.org). Each position has a separate training module.

Although online training is easier, many leaders find it more rewarding to take a live in-person course. Not only does the in-person course allow you to cover all of the positions in one sitting, but it also gives you a chance to meet other leaders and share ideas and experiences. Live training is fun! Even if you've already taken the online training, you'll probably learn something new by attending a live course.

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# Live Training

## Basic Information

Every Cub Scout leader should take basic training... and when we do it in person, we make it fun! We can run it two ways:

- A 90-minute to 2-hour session for one specific position: Den Leader, Cubmaster/Assistant Cubmaster, or Pack Committee.
- A 4-hour session that covers all the positions.

Either way, you will...

- Learn about your role in delivering a fun and successful Cub Scouting program
- Find out what resources are available to help you
- Pick up new skills, program ideas, games, activities, and more
- Meet other leaders and share ideas

This training covers the same requirements as the online courses, but many leaders find the live version more rewarding and more enjoyable. This course also gives you a chance to meet other leaders and share ideas and experiences. Once you've completed Youth Protection training (online) and this course, you can proudly wear the "Trained" patch on your uniform.

## This Year's Courses

We'll be running position-specific courses several times throughout the day at each of our Cub Leader Kickoff events... don't miss it! More details are below.

- Saturday, September 16, 2017, in Hanover (register online)
- Saturday, October 14, 2017, in Easton (register online)

*More courses will be added over time. Check with your district*

*training chair for more information or to arrange a course near you. To run this course, we need a free meeting space, a pack willing to “host,” and a commitment from at least five leaders to attend.*

## **What to Bring**

When you attend a live Cub leader-specific training course, you should...

- Wear your Scout uniform – or the closest thing you have to a uniform (for example, a pack t-shirt)
  - Bring a handbook for your level of Cub Scouting, if you have one
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## **Fall 2017 Kickoff Events**

☒ Cub Scout Leaders – join us for a great kickoff to the year! Activities will run throughout the day and you can come and go as you please. Here’s what’s on tap:

### **Activities**

- In-person position-specific training (Den Leader, Cubmaster/Assistant, Pack Committee).
- Workshops on crafts, skits and songs, ceremonies, working with youth with disabilities, and more.
- Youth protection training and help with online recordkeeping.
- Leader guides for sale, registration materials, and other resources to save you a trip to the council office or the Scout store.
- Outdoor cooking demos and a delicious lunch!
- Vendors and exhibits.
- Fun activities for your Cub-age youth (so you’re welcome to bring your own kids... we’ll take care of keeping them

busy!)

- A chance to meet fellow leaders and get resources to start the new year off strong!

This event is a great chance to meet fellow leaders, share ideas, and get ready for a fun and successful year of Cub Scouting!

## Locations, Times, and Additional Details

<p><b>Saturday, September 16, 2017</b> St. Mary's Church 392 Hanover St., Hanover 8:30 AM to 4:00 PM Detailed schedule Register online</p>	<p><b>Saturday, October 14, 2017</b> Covenant Congregational Church 204 Center St., Easton 8:30 AM to 4:00 PM Detailed Schedule Register online</p>
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Lunch on both days will be available between 11:30 and 1:30 for \$5.00. Meal tickets can be purchased in advance or at the door. We would greatly appreciate pre-registration so we have a good head count for food and training materials.

Course flyer – please share!

For more information, contact Chris Lamie.

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## Handouts and Links

*Handouts will be posted after the course.*

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# Council Shoulder Patch Design Competition

To celebrate our new name, the Mayflower Council is launching a competition, open to all scouts and scouters, to choose a new Council Shoulder Patch (CSP) design. Submissions for the new design will be accepted, from Sept. 9 – October 15.

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## Council 251 Becomes Mayflower Council

**Pending approval by the voting members of**

**Council 251 on August 30, 2017**

***Council 251 will be the Mayflower Council***

Council 251's new name was chosen through an extensive and inclusive process approved by the board that included:

- An online naming contest
- A naming workshop with scouts from across the council to develop a "short list"
- Final selection by a sub-committee appointed by the

board

The scouts, scouters, and friends of scouting from 50 towns and cities that submitted 144 entries to the contest deserve a very big "Thank You." Reading and evaluating the online entries was a humbling experience as there were so many carefully chosen and thoughtful submissions. Getting to the new name was neither an easy nor a simple exercise; it took much deliberation and commitment from all involved.

In finding the right new name for the new council we wanted a name that would support the past, present, and future of Council 251. It also had to be compatible with and support the Boy Scouts of America brand and brand position. To help guide the selection process we focused on six key criteria: distinctiveness, brevity, appropriateness, easy spelling and pronunciations, likeability, and extendibility.

The word Mayflower has high recognition and is instantly known nation-wide as the ship that transported the Pilgrims to the New World in 1620 and landed in Plymouth Massachusetts.

The Mayflower is also the name of the Massachusetts State Flower. Chosen in 1918 by the state's school children, the Mayflower is an evergreen ground shrub that prefers to grow in rocky terrain as well as along trail edges and forest clearings. Scouts are often found in these areas.

Mayflower is easy to spell, easy to say, and easy to pronounce. It also passes the appropriateness criteria quite well; the word does not have negative connotations and misspelling the word doesn't lead to negative inferences. Online searches show positive or neutral usage and show that the council will be easily found in web searches.

A last area of concern was geography. The scouts and scouters involved in the final selection process liked the name but some were concerned about geography; was the name too specific to the former Old Colony Council and not equitable to members

of the former Knox Trail Council? The scouts and scouters involved in the process discussed the issue and concluded that the name belonged to all of Massachusetts and not just to the Plymouth area. For those interested there were more scouts and scouters from the former Knox Trail Council involved in the process than from the former Old Colony Council.

This fall the council will launch a new website with a new internet address at [www.mayflowerbsa.org](http://www.mayflowerbsa.org). Social media will also be moved over time to new address on: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, and Pinterest, using @MayflowerBSA

Shortly the council will be announcing a design contest to submit concepts and ideas for the new council patch. Stay tuned to the council newsletter and website for more information.

## **NAMING PROCESS**

During the merger process, the two former Councils understood that it would be very important to promptly choose a new Council name. At the first meeting of the new Executive Board, the Council adopted a process successfully used by the Mayflower Council in choosing names for its districts. Headed by our Vice President of Marketing and Communications, Ed Hastings, the naming process was designed to have three phases.

- In July, the Council conducted a "Name My Council" contest, soliciting proposed names from Scouts and volunteers. The contest was announced at both Camp Resolute and Camp Squanto, was posted on our websites and on social media and sent by individual units to their members. By July 31<sup>st</sup>, the contest yielded over 140 suggested names, each with an explanation or story. Generally, the submitted names demonstrated a lot of serious thought for an appropriate permanent name for our Council.

- In early August, the list of names was submitted to a panel of Scouts from both former Councils. Ed Hastings provided that group with criteria to consider when choosing an effective name – the same criteria described on the enclosed announcement. The Scouts were asked to narrow the list from 140+ and they recommended seven names for further consideration. Again, the process was thoughtful and thorough.
- Last week, the committee appointed by the Board to make the final suggestion met, along with two youth leaders and the Scout Executive. After further discussion, that Committee decided, unanimously, to recommend the name “Mayflower Council” to the membership.

## **MEETING OF THE MEMBERS**

Several members have asked why the Council is calling for a further, in-person meeting for a vote by the members. Initially, the plan was to have the Executive Board vote on the proposed name, but the Council was advised that Massachusetts state law requires a vote of the members of a nonprofit corporation to approve certain actions, including a merger (done) and a name change (what we are doing now). This vote has to take place at a meeting because the national rules of the BSA and the Council’s by-laws do not permit voting by proxy.

In short, the Council realizes that asking you to turn out to cast another vote is asking a lot, but Massachusetts state law and the BSA rules require that we do so.

## **WHAT ARE WE VOTING ON?**

The sole question before the meeting is whether or not to accept the name “Mayflower Council” as the new name for our merged Council.

If the vote is favorable, the Council will submit the vote to the Secretary of the Commonwealth for approval, and, when

received, the new name will become official. If the vote is unfavorable, the Council will continue to be known as "Council 251" and the Naming Committee will reconvene and bring forward another name for the membership to vote upon.

The ballot on which you will be asked to vote is anticipated to read as follows: "Resolved, that the name of the Mayflower Council, Inc., Boy Scouts of America shall be changed to Mayflower Council, Inc., Boy Scouts of America and that the Scout Executive and Officers of the corporation are hereby authorized to execute any and all documents and instruments, and amendments thereto, required in connection with the change of name as the Scout Executive and Officers may deem advisable or necessary, all of which documents and instruments executed and delivered as aforesaid shall be and constitute the acts of the Corporation, and (b) to do all other things on behalf of the Corporation necessary or convenient to carry out the change of name."

#### **WHY "MAYFLOWER COUNCIL"?**

The name "Mayflower Council" was contained in five separate suggestions submitted during the contest. The group of scouts that narrowed the list put this name in their top two selections, and ultimately their overall top selection. The Scouts stated that "Mayflower" met the key criteria for a strong name – it is distinctive, brief, appropriate for a Boy Scout Council, easy to pronounce and spell and has a very strong association with our area. It is also available as a Council name.

#### **ISN'T THE "MAYFLOWER" HEAVILY ASSOCIATED WITH PLYMOUTH**

The adults on the committees identified one potential objection to the name "Mayflower" – that it is a name that could be associated more with one area of the new Council than the Council as a whole. This question was put to the Scouts on the Name Selection Committee – consisting of both legacy

KTC and OCC Scouts – who agreed, unanimously, that they saw “Mayflower” as applying to Massachusetts generally and drew a distinction from other names that were submitted.

That same issue was carefully considered by the committee that made the final recommendation to the membership. That committee, made up of volunteers from the two legacy Councils, saw the name Mayflower as being generally associated with Massachusetts and its heritage. As a name, “Mayflower” has instant national and international recognition.

### **WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?**

As with the merger, we want to be available to respond to questions or comments that the voting members have about the proposed name. While the vote will be limited to Yes or No on the adoption of the name “Mayflower”, Council leadership feels strongly that you should be fully informed prior to the vote. If you have questions, please feel free to email them to [naming@mayflowerbsa.org](mailto:naming@mayflowerbsa.org) or, if you prefer, call the office at (508) 872-6551 and a member of the Naming Committee will call you to discuss.

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# **Lion Pilot Program for Kindergarteners**

# **Lion pilot program for**

# kindergarteners off to a roaring start, with exciting changes coming for 2017-2018

August 14, 2017 Bryan Wendell Cub Scouting 39



“It’s fun, hands-on and active.” “It’s simple and easy to implement.” “It’s age-appropriate, builds character and develops new skills.”

That’s just a glimpse of what parents and youth across the country are saying about Lions, the BSA’s pilot program for kindergarten-age boys.

Lions answers the call for fun, character-building after-school adventures for boys 5 or 6 years old or in kindergarten. Lions begins its second season as a nationwide pilot program in the 2017-2018 Scouting year.

Pilot is the operative word here. It means this program is evolving based on feedback from parents and BSA professionals. Based on that feedback, as well as surveys and focus groups,

the BSA has some changes to announce for this fall.

I'll share those changes a little later in the post. First, let's take a quick look at what people are saying about Lions so far.



## **What did families think of Lions in 2016-2017?**

Lion Guides, parents, and youth agreed that the program content was enjoyable, effective and engaging.

“Overall, the Lion program was a big hit with our pack,” one survey respondent wrote. “In my opinion, this is the best idea the BSA has come up with, next to allowing girls to join Venturing.”

Many said they got the training and support from council and district volunteers to help make their Lion experience a success.

Other highlights from the survey:

- **61 percent** of Lion parents indicated they have no other child in Scouting. This means Lions is both recruiting new families to Scouting as well as serving siblings of existing Scouts.
- **90 percent** of parents said they liked the uniform T-shirt, shared-leadership model, age-appropriate activities, youth Adventure book and immediate recognition stickers. They're also pleased with the meeting duration, frequency and content. They said the Leader Guidebook was simple and easy to follow and that the Adventures were engaging for the boys.
- **91 percent** of parents say their Lion will be moving to Tigers. This is probably the best indicator of all that the pilot program is success.



## What's new in Lions for 2017-2018?

- **Pack meetings and activities will be open to Lion families who want to participate.** Lion families said they wanted more pack involvement, and now they have the option of being included in program, skits, and more.
- **Pinewood Derby open to Lions.** Packs have three recommended options for implementing this:
  1. Integrate into the pack Derby with other Cub Scouts.
  2. Use the wedge car from the Scout Shop to eliminate cutting.
  3. Have Lions participate in a Veggie Car Derby, where potatoes and cucumbers replace wood blocks.
- **Fundraising will be allowed as a family option.** Although they don't want mandatory levels of funds to raise, Lion families indicated they do want to have the option to

raise funds. Spring fundraising is encouraged. If popcorn is sold by Lions, a show-and-sell approach where older boys and parents are also present is preferred. Door-to-door selling would only be appropriate if the parent is by the youth's side.

- **Uniform T-shirt won't change, but families can buy button-down if they want.** Parents and boys love the required Lion T-shirt and optional cap. But this change allows families to buy official blue Cub Scout button-down shirts and blue pants as desired for special occasions and pack ceremonies.
  - **A Lion-specific page in *Boys' Life*.** Parents can use this great resource to help unlock the world of reading for their child.
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## **From the Chief: The Presidential Visit**

Scouting Family,

In the last two weeks, we have celebrated the best of Scouting at our 20th National Jamboree with nearly 40,000 participants, volunteers, staff and visitors. The 2017 National Jamboree has showcased and furthered the Scouting mission by combining adventure and leadership development to give youth life-changing experiences. Scouts from Alaska met Scouts from Alabama; Scouts from New Mexico met those from New York, and American youth met youth from 59 other countries.

Over the course of ten days, Scouts have taken part in adventures, learned new skills, made new and lasting friendships and completed over 200 community service projects that offered 100,000 hours of service to the community by

young men and women eager to do the right thing for the right reasons.

These character-building experiences have not diminished in recent days at the jamboree – Scouts have continued to trade patches, climb rock walls, and share stories about the day's adventures. But for our Scouting family at home not able to see these real moments of Scouting, we know the past few days have been overshadowed by the remarks offered by the President of the United States.

I want to extend my sincere apologies to those in our Scouting family who were offended by the political rhetoric that was inserted into the jamboree. That was never our intent. The invitation for the sitting U.S. President to visit the National Jamboree is a long-standing tradition that has been extended to the leader of our nation that has had a Jamboree during his term since 1937. It is in no way an endorsement of any person, party or policies. For years, people have called upon us to take a position on political issues, and we have steadfastly remained non-partisan and refused to comment on political matters. We sincerely regret that politics were inserted into the Scouting program.

While we live in a challenging time in a country divided along political lines, the focus of Scouting remains the same today as every day.

Trustworthiness, loyalty, kindness and bravery are just a few of the admirable traits Scouts aspire to develop – in fact, they make up the Scout Oath and Scout Law.

As part of our program's duty to country, we teach youth to become active citizens, to participate in their government, respect the variety of perspectives and to stand up for individual rights.

Few will argue the importance of teaching values and responsibility to our youth – not only right from wrong, but specific positive values such as fairness, courage, honor and respect for others.

For all of the adventure we provide youth such as hiking, camping and zip-lining, those activities actually serve as proven pathways and opportunities to develop leadership skills and become people of character.

In a time when differences seem to separate our country, we hope the true spirit of Scouting will empower our next generation of leaders to bring people together to do good in the world.

Yours in Scouting,  
Mike Surbaugh