

AKELA WAHINAPAY LODGE ORDEAL

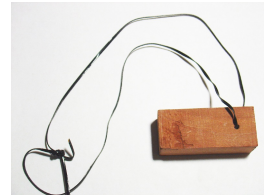
Akela Wahinapay Lodge of the Order of the Arrow has always been an integral part of the summer camp program at Camp Pioneer. It is the highlight of the week. In the early days the Order of the Arrow program night was on Thursday; today it is on Friday.

Following the prior practices of the Tribe of the Ku-Ni-Eh, the OA members in camp that week would meet secretly before the evening program to discuss the merits and performance of potential candidates in camp. An individual vote was taken for each name using a voting box containing black and white balls. After the box went around the room, the bottom drawer was opened; if there were no black balls in the drawer, the individual was selected as a candidate. A Scout could attend more than one camp session and be re-considered each session.

The OA program was held at the camp council ring. Parents and guests were invited. The campers were positioned around the ring in front of log seats. An unlit council fire was in the center. After Indian prayers to “Wakonda”, the Great Spirit, ending with “Noonway”, Amen, the council fire was miraculously lit by a hidden trip-wire. Potassium permanganate and glycerin were combined inside the fire-lay to spontaneously ignite the fire.



Following ceremonial words, the chief and others moved around the circle of standing campers, tapping out the candidates by punching their shoulders. As they flew over the log seat behind them, they were caught by catchers who traveled around the outside of the ring in sync with the chief. Each candidate was moved to the center where his upper body was stripped and his chest was painted with grease paint (an arrow, OA, and the year). A wooden gorget was placed around their necks. Following this procedure each candidate was tapped out and assembled behind the council ring.



The ceremony was concluded; and the candidates were placed on silence, instructed to return to their cabins, collect their sleeping bags, a flashlight, pocket knife, ground cloth, and a poncho.



After returning, each candidate was blindfolded and individually led to remote locations, given three matches to build a fire, and left alone to spend the night. Each was instructed to find his way back to the departure point upon awakening. When they arrived, they were taken off silence, told not to discuss their experience, return to normal merit badge activities, and come to the Summer Pow Wow in August where they would complete their Ordeal and their induction.

Candidate elections in troops started in 1955. The results of the troop elections were kept secret and the names were forwarded to the lodge. The OA members in camp still secretly met each week, considered the troop elections as recommendations, and voted on each candidate along with others observed in camp that week. Scouts had to be in camp to be considered and to be tapped out.

The process is pretty much the same today except overriding OA votes of the election results are

not taken unless a known violation of Scout Spirit has occurred, the tap-out is on Friday night, and the Ordeal is not split. Candidates' shirts are no longer removed nor are they painted, blindfolds are not used, and the candidates spend the night as a group. Attendance at Camp Pioneer or an out-of-council summer camp is still required to be called out and to be inducted.

At Camp Pioneer the call-out described above is still in practice. Attendance at an out-of-council summer camp requires a letter from the Akela Wahinapay Lodge Chief requesting a call-out, along with the election report. Once called out, the Ordeal and induction can be taken at either the lodge's Summer Pow Wow, Fall Arrowee, or Spring Arrowee. Out-of council campers must be inducted by their home lodge.