

APRIL – SUMMER COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

Music Full then under

LEE: Hello, and welcome, ScoutCast listeners! I'm National Alliance Team Leader, Lee Shaw.

BRYAN: And I'm *Scouting* Magazine Blogger, Bryan Wendell. This month we ask the question: what summer activities should my troop get involved in? Now, Lee, we know about camping, right? That's a BSA staple.

LEE: But Jeff Bostwick thinks we should be looking at other activities in the summer to help promote Scouting in your community. So let's find out what that's all about.

BRYAN: Let's do it.

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LEE Jeff has served as Assistant Scoutmaster, district chair, OA Lodge Advisor and council training chair. He is currently the Western Region Area 6 commissioner, a member of the National Boy Scout Experience Task Force, the National Wood Badge Update Task Force, and the National Merit Badge Maintenance Task Force. In addition to that, he is the vice chair of the Merit Badge Group for the 2017 National Jamboree. Somehow, he has found the time to talk with us today and we're happy to have him on the show. Welcome to ScoutCast, Jeff.

JEFF: It's great to be here. Thanks for having me.

LEE: So, we usually think of Scouting in terms of the school year; starting in the fall and ending in the spring, then going to camp in the summer. But Jeff, what are the benefits of other summer activities for the youth?

JEFF: First of all, since our classroom is the outdoors, the summer provides generally the weather and the time away from school to allow the Scouts to have an exciting experience, a fun experience, and a learning experience in the outdoors. The thrill of the outdoors, the adventure of the outdoors and the lessons of the outdoors are more especially available to Scouts during the summer months. Summer is really the prime time for Scouting.

BRYAN: So, we've got fun, learning and adventure, and it's in the best season of the year. What other benefits are there to these summer activities?

JEFF: When there's a summer program, the program all throughout the year for the troop or the crew is enriched. And as a result of that, it will attract more Scouts, so membership will benefit. Moreover, the Scouts will have a great experience in their team or their troop or their crew, and as a result they'll stay with the program, so it benefits retention as well. And it provides Scouts with an amazing set of experiences that are fun and exciting.

LEE: So, what are some of the activities that a troop or crew can do?

JEFF: A lot of these activities are set in the outdoors, and not just summer camp. For example, all things high adventure – backpacking treks, cycling treks, trips to Scouting's High Adventure Bases – all of that fully is operational during the summer and is the best time to have those type of activities for the Scouts. Anything that you can think of that provides adventure, fun and excitement for Scouts can be done most especially during the summer because summer generally, for most areas of our country, has weather that is favorable to summer activities and there is some level of break from school so that the Scouts can participate in these activities both in their

community and outside of the community all throughout the days, not just on weekends. So, a unit can tailor to the needs of the families in their unit as to what type of activities that can be conducted during the summer months. And on budget, they can make sure that they plan activities that utilize all the resources in the local communities, which will not overly tax family's budget.

BRYAN: Now, (I've got to) ask because we're hoping our listeners are asking, do we need some sort of permission or permits to do some of those activities that you're talking about?

JEFF: Absolutely. The unit always should follow all of BSA's permit requirements and where the Scouts are going to participate in publicly owned lands, many of those agencies, either National Parks, local park and rec centers, have permit requirements. And so the unit should be careful to follow all of the permit requirements, fill out all the necessary paperwork, so that their presence and use of those lands and facilities is authorized fully.

BRYAN: And isn't there some required training based on the type of activity that you're going to be doing with your unit as well, Jeff?

JEFF: There's always Youth Protection Training and for many of the more adventurous and high-adventure experiences, there are any number of level of supplemental training that the unit leaders should have.

LEE: Hey, Jeff, how can we get others involved, whether that's parents or chartered organizations? How do we make sure that everyone has a part to play?

JEFF: The first step is for the unit to have a great annual plan. That means a plan for the entire calendar year, and as we're discussing here today, especially the summer months. The steps in an annual plan are that the Scouts, plan the activities under the direction and guidelines of the unit leader. Then they

submit the plan for a review by the respective unit committee, who then upon approval of plan publishes the plan or distributes the plan to the families of the Scouts so that they're all onboard. And in the case of a crew, for example, the VOA in each council should be weighing in on the plan, so a well-thought-out plan that follows the troop or crew or team annual planning process that BSA maps out is very important.

LEE: So, Jeff, what activities can be done to benefit the charter organizations of the troops?

JEFF: The first thing that the leaders of the unit should do, the senior patrol leaders through the Scout leader, sit down with the chartered organization's representative and find out what they need. Maybe they need work done around the hall in which they meet. Maybe they need work done on the grounds. But service is a great opportunity to strengthen that relationship between that unit and that unit's chartered organization.

BRYAN: And all that would count even though it's during the summer, right? I think a lot of people think that advancement pauses during the summer.

JEFF: In fact, it's the opposite. These program elements should be in full swing all during the summer, and that includes all the opportunities for advancement, for service hours, for service projects that go along with it.

BRYAN: Are there activities for the summer that are happening right in your community that could just happen for the day where you can get your troop engaged right there in town?

JEFF: Let's not forget that the Fourth of July is in the summer, so that's a great start point because there's any number of community activities that revolve around the Fourth of July – not only participation in the Fourth of July events like parades, and other activities associated with the day itself, but also service projects that wrap around the Fourth of July such as a clean-up. I

know of one unit in my council, every year they participate in a Fourth of July parade, and then for the city parks and rec, they clean up the park where the Fourth of July celebration for that community takes place. And as a result of that service project each year, they are afforded the benefit of using that park freely by the local authorities. So, that's an example of a great relationship between that particular troop and the park and recreations department of that particular community where the troop is involved not only with the Fourth of July celebration but has also tagged a service project onto that celebration.

BRYAN: So, Jeff, when Scouts and troops are out there in the community during the summer, there's non-Scouts and families and even tourists that are seeing them, right? So, talk a little bit about the benefit of that visibility.

JEFF: When people think of Scouts, they think of people who are dedicated to service and to citizenship and to their community. And so, all throughout the summer, when the Scouts are out and about in the community, they provide that touchstone and reinforcement to the idea that Scouting provides leadership experience, citizenship and also service. So, as the Scout unit provides service through the community, whether it's a particular service project that they undertake or it's opportunities for service as they're doing other projects, we reinforce the aims of Scouting in the minds of the people in the community.

The unit, in return, receives great benefit from it. First of all, it's a great recruiting tool although that's not why we do it. Also, the unit receives that solidified relationship between a unit and the community, so when the unit needs help from the community, the unit is in a better position to seek that help from the community. So, the service that Scouts render in and around the community, their presence in and around the community and, where appropriate, wearing the uniform when the unit does an activity as a unit in

around the community, solidifies the relationship between the unit and the community.

BRYAN: And some troops, Jeff, they just take the summer off. They say, "Yeah, we have some kids going to Philmont, Sea Base, Northern Tier, the Summit. So you're saying that even if everybody can't be there at every event, there still need to be those activities, that the troop needs to not be dormant during what's arguably the greatest season of the year.

JEFF: That's absolutely right, and to some extent it almost does a little bit of a disservice to the unit to take the summer off because it's very difficult to fire up the Scouts at the end of the summer for a resumption of a program that starts in the fall. They get out of the habit of going to the activities, going to the meetings, things tend to lie dormant, and so ramping up a program in the fall when school starts again is much more difficult. And, in fact, the unit risks losing a lot of Scouts who lose interest in Scouting.

LEE: Jeff, you talked about membership, you've talked about retention and the part that it plays with the summer community activities and talking about service to others and all of those are so very important. Is there anything else about the summer community activities that we haven't talked about that you'd like to share with our listeners?

JEFF: Whether they stay in town, go out of town, stay in state or go out of state, whether it's cycling, backpacking, trips to historical sites within the community, the point is there should be full activity and an aggressive program all throughout the summer months because it is our prime time for Scouting.

LEE Well, Jeff, I've got to tell you, as the leader of the team that works with our national chartered partners, I really appreciate you sharing how to

incorporate *them* into the summer activities. So, Jeffrey, thanks for coming on ScoutCast. It's been a pleasure.

JEFF: It's been my pleasure.

BRYAN: Okay, let's pop in on CubCast and then we'll be back with Reminders and Tips.

(Cubcast – The Active Summertime Unit)

BRYAN: Okay, that sounds familiar. Alright, it's time for Reminders and Ticks. April is Youth Protection Month and the Boy Scouts of America takes that very seriously. Now would be a good time to review all the materials and resources from our Youth Protection website. That's at scouting.org/training/youthprotection.

LEE: This is also a good time to have a family meeting to watch the DVD *A Time to Tell*. It's designed specifically for boys ages nine to 14 to help give them a heads-up on ways to keep themselves protected.

BRYAN: *Personal Safety Awareness* is a DVD designed for the older kids in your troop or crew. You should also go to my.scouting.org, and be sure your youth protection training is up-to-date.

LEE: Now, on a lighter note, professional fisherman Tom Reddington shares his best fishing tips in this month's *Boys' Life* magazine. And Gear-Guy tells you everything you need to know about fishing-related equipment.

BRYAN: I'll be sure to "catch" that one. Anyway - so, does your troop favor the tepee or the lean-to when building a fire? Well, the March-April issue of *Scouting* magazine shows you these and other fire-building techniques, so check it out.

BEGIN MUSIC UNDER

BRYAN: Well, that's it for April ScoutCast. I want to say a special thanks to our guest, Jeff Bostwick.

LEE: So, was that discussion useful? Let us know by sending an email to ScoutCast@scouting.org, or tweet @bsascoutcast. With that, I'm Lee Shaw.

BRYAN: And I'm Bryan Wendell. Thanks for listening and we'll see you next month.

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