

MARCH – BRIDGING

Music Full then Under

GINA: Hello, everyone. I'm Gina Circelli along with Aaron Derr, and we're so glad you've tuned into *Scouting Magazine's* CubCast for March.

AARON: This month we ask the question: what is bridging? What does it mean?

GINA: We found a volunteer who, we believe, will help explain everything we need to know about it.

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GINA: And that volunteer extraordinaire is Bill Campbell. Bill runs Pack 143 out of the Central Florida Council, that is known for offering a high-quality Scouting program with a healthy balance of fundraising, advancements, and outdoor activities and is on this year's Wood Badge staff and Welcome to CubCast, Bill.

BILL: Hey, how are you doing?

GINA: I'm good. How are you?

BILL: Not too bad.

GINA: Glad to hear it. Thanks for joining us. I have got maybe kind of a silly question. Maybe it's not. What does "bridging" mean?

BILL: Bridging is when a Cub goes from one Cub rank to the next at the end of the Scouting year.

AARON: Now, if you Google "bridging," you might also find some results for "crossover" or, say, "Webelos to Scout Transition." What's the difference?

BILL: Crossover is done when our AOL Scouts are ready to move up to troop level.

GINA: Okay. So, it sounds like there's some major prep that has to go into this if we're planning a ceremony or recognition of any kind. Why is it so important to plan for a bridging?

BILL: Well, the bridging should be different. It should be a little more ceremonial, a little more important than some of your other awards nights. It's something that needs to stand out in this Cub minds as well as the family.

AARON: Yeah. This is a big deal, right? This is the culmination of a whole year's worth of work. So, like you say it needs to be kind of special. How do you guys get parents involved?

BILL: T the main way to get parents involved in bridging, is when the Scout walks the bridge from one length to the next, we have them walk with a parent or guardian next to them.

AARON: Now, you say "walk the bridge," - it's an actual bridge?

BILL: One of our AOL dens in the past - they've actually created a bridge. Each plank of the bridge has a step of the Scout Law written on it.

GINA: Cool!

AARON: That's really cool. Very nice.

GINA: It seems like a bridging could be pretty important potentially for retention, so it's probably good to have a successful bridging. Do you have any tips for how to make sure a bridging is successful?

BILL: The main thing is remember that everything is being done for the Scouts, for the kids, so you don't want it to be too ceremonious and boring; get a couple laughs out of the kids, have some fun, but impress on them the importance of what they've achieved.

AARON: It's still gotta be fun, as we're talking about Cub Scout age kids here. My son's Cub Scout pack always had our bridging ceremony at the end of the year at a park, outdoors in the spring, so it was, kind of set it apart from a regular pack meeting. It was a special location. We have them bring foods, kind of have a picnic and things like that. Just curious what kind of bridging ceremonies have you guys had?

BILL: We're lucky to have our chartered organization, (that) lets us use the actual sanctuary for our bridging ceremony. So, the Scouts are up on stage with the lights and the sound system, and that's how we do our bridging. Our crossover is a totally different scenario.

GINA: It sounds like a good way to make it really special and set it apart for your Scouts. So, in your opinion, how does a great bridging ceremony aid in retention and, recruiting potentially?

BILL: It aids in retention because it lets the families of the Scouts see what's being done moving up different ranks. They want to achieve that. They may be their friends, they may be their siblings, see them crossing over in the troop, and it makes them want to stick with it and move on with their friends and family.

GINA: We'll be back with more on Bridging right after this.

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AARON: For Scout leaders out there who are maybe starting the process of planning their bridging ceremony here in the next month or two, what kind of resources are available to for them to help?

BILL: Your biggest resource is your families. Ask them what they want to see from it. Go to your local Roundtable, speak to some other Cubmasters, Scoutmasters, see what they have done in the past, what worked, what hasn't worked.

AARON: Nice.

GINA: So, Bill, is there anything else about bridging that you think we should share with our listeners?

BILL: The main thing about bridging, this is number one above and beyond; It's not about be the adults, it's very easy to make it a pat on the backs for the Den Leaders. Make it about the Scouts. This is their last thing they're going to be doing at that rank. On our bridging, let's say the Wolf. They'll get their final Wolf award that night, cross over the bridge where I, the Cubmaster, will take off their old neckerchief and slide and give them the new neckerchief and slide of their rank.

AARON: Yeah. You say it's not about the adults, right, it's about the Scouts.

BILL: Correct.

GINA: It's a good thing for us to keep in mind in all the programs, all the time: we're doing it for the kids. And especially a ceremony that's aimed at making them feel special should be totally tailored to them.

AARON: Like you say, it's the end of a year's worth of work a lot of times, so they deserve a special recognition, right?

GINA: Bill, we really appreciate you sharing your experiences with bridging and explaining to everyone why it's so important to Scouting, so thanks for being on CubCast.

BILL: Glad I could help.

AARON: We'll be back with Reminders and Tips right after this brief Safety Moment.

(Safety Moment – AHMR)

AARON: OK, folks, it's time for this month's reminders. Be sure to start finalizing details for your summer camping opportunities. This includes day camp, family camp, resident camp and pack overnights. Make sure that you have all the equipment checked out so that everything is working properly.

GINA: And make sure parents are making fee payments and the site has been reserved. If you haven't already done so, be sure to contact your district about a camp promotion at a pack meeting.

AARON: You also need to be sure that everyone has the proper training. BALOO, which is the Basic Adult Leader Outdoor Orientation, and Hazardous Weather Training are required for any campout.

GINA: It's too warm for skiing or sledding and too cold for swimming or picnics, so why not spend the time catching up on your training? Contact your local council for training dates.

AARON: And one last thing: have you supported your local council financially? If not, now is a great time to do so. Be sure to participate in a Friends of Scouting campaign or another Scouting fundraiser.

GINA: Remember, financial donations don't always mean cold, hard cash. See what gifts in kind you may be able to provide to your local council.

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GINA: So now our March episode comes to an end. Thanks to our guest Bill Campbell and thanks to you for listening.

AARON: Be sure to send us your thoughts and ideas for a future CubCast. Just send an email to cubcast@scouting.org or a tweet to @cubcast. And with that, I'm Aaron Derr.

GINA: And I'm Gina Circelli. Have a great rest of your day.

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