



CANDIDATE AND PARENT LETTER

SPRING ASSEMBLY May 1 – 3, 2026, LOST PINES SCOUT RESERVATION

Dear Scouting Family,

Congratulations! Your son or daughter has been elected by their peers as a candidate for the Order of the Arrow, the society of honor campers within the Scouts BSA. The OA is a national brotherhood of scouts that originated in 1915.

Candidates for the Order of the Arrow are chosen not only for what they have done, but also for what they are expected to do in serving others. Because your son or daughter was selected for candidacy by the unique method of being elected by their peers, we are certain that he or she is worthy of this honor.

By National rule, they must now participate in an Ordeal weekend (Assembly) within 18 months of the date of their election—NOT the date of their call out ceremony. Our Lodge typically offers two - three Ordeal weekends per year: spring and fall at Lost Pines Scout Reservation in Bastrop and a winter weekend at Camp Green Dickson near Gonzalez or at Smilin V near Liberty Hill.

The Ordeal offers a unique opportunity to reflect on their personal commitment to the principles of the Scout Oath and Law. The weekends will also allow them to become acquainted with the principles and purposes of the Order of the Arrow. The Ordeal must be completed by each new candidate and is a meaningful and inspiring experience that will not soon be forgotten.

This Tonkawa Lodge Assembly will take place at [Lost Pines Scout Reservation](#), located near Bastrop, Texas and comprises the induction processes for new members into the Order of the Arrow. Commonly known as The Ordeal, candidates will meet a series of challenges that will foster self-reflection and test their commitment to a life of cheerful service. For existing members, Assembly Weekend offers a chance to strengthen friendships and serve Scouting in meaningful ways.

The Lodge will be hosting an Ordeal (Assembly) Weekend on May 1 – 3, 2026. To register, go to this website <https://scoutingevent.com/564-OAASSEMBLY>.

Candidates will arrive at Lost Pines Scout Reservation on Friday, May 1, 2026. Please plan on parking in the main parking lot at Lost Pines and walking to the dining hall for check-in and registration. To save trips back and forth, it is recommended that candidates bring all their gear with them when they head to registration.

To attend this assembly, **it will be necessary that you bring with you the following hard-copy documents:**

- **Part A and Part B of your Annual Health & Medical Record (we need hard paper copies- there is no mechanism to upload them and please do not email them to us)**

Please note that the Ordeal starts on Friday night and ends after dismissal on Sunday. Participants cannot leave camp early or come late once the Ordeal starts and expect to complete the induction process. Please see the section on “Ordeal Completion Requirements” below for more information.

The Ordeal will be completed around noon on May 3, 2026, at the conclusion of the annual Lodge business meeting and officer elections. You may pick up your son or daughter in the parking lot at Lost Pines. Please do not come early or be late.

Pursuant to Council policy for health and safety reasons, no visitors will be allowed on camp during this event. **Please park in the main lot and wait for your son or daughter there.**

Induction into the Order of the Arrow will open many new doors for your son or daughter. Our Lodge participates in many events every year such as OA Section Conclaves, National Order of the Arrow Conference (NOAC), and various fellowship weekends. In addition, the OA provides some of the most valuable youth leadership training and opportunities available. These opportunities will build upon the knowledge your son or daughter has already received during their Scouting experience. This is truly an exciting time for your family. Once again, congratulations.

Richard South
Tonkawa Lodge Adviser

Trevor Suggs
Tonkawa Lodge Chief

Equipment and Packing List

The only gear needed by candidates will be:

The clothes they wear:

- Hat
- T-shirt
- Cloth face mask (optional)
- Work Pants
- Socks
- Work Shirt
- Closed-toed shoes or boots (not Crocs)
- Work gloves

Long pants and shirts are highly recommended.

In a small backpack, candidates should carry:

- Weather appropriate gear (fleece or jacket) if necessary
- Poncho or rain gear
- Sleeping Bag & Pad
- Pocketknife (MANDATORY)
- Water Bottle (MANDATORY)
- Sunscreen
- Small bottle of Hand Sanitizer
- Gloves
- Flashlight
- Wet Wipes
- Small tarp

In a separate backpack, candidates should bring:

- Class A Uniform
- Small tent for Saturday night
- Personal hygiene gear
- Small towel

We have a secure location for the separate backpacks for Friday night and Saturday during the day. Candidates will have an opportunity to retrieve their backpacks, set up their tent, and shower and clean up Saturday afternoon.

Please have your son or daughter eat dinner before arriving to check in. No food will be available on Friday. Three meals will be served on Saturday. There will be breakfast served on Sunday. Please be sure to note any dietary concerns or food allergies on the registration form. If you have any special dietary restrictions that we cannot accommodate (we can accommodate vegetarian, no red meat/no pork, lactose intolerant, and gluten free), you need to bring your own non-perishable ready to eat food for the weekend – all others are expected to eat only what is provided.

The registration fee for candidates is \$75.00. Dues for 2026 are included with the registration fee. See the [Renew or Transfer Membership page](#) on the Tonkawa website for more information. All candidates MUST bring a non-returnable copy of the BSA health form (parts A & B only).

THIS IS A BLACKPUG EVENT – WE ARE ABLE TO COLLECT FEES THROUGH THE COUNCIL REGISTRATION SYSTEM. Full or partial payment may be made electronically via the web site, or you can choose to pay at the door. At the site, all outstanding assembly fees are collected by cash, check, or credit cards at the time of check in on site.

WE DO NOT HAVE ACCESS TO YOUR TROOP ACCOUNTS, SO YOU MUST MAKE PAYMENT THROUGH THE WEB SITE OR AT THE DOOR.

EVENT INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND CANDIDATES

The Ordeal is a time-honored tradition more than 100 years in the making. Following these rules will ensure that the Ordeal is observed with the utmost respect and decorum.

BEFORE ARRIVAL

Be prepared.

Watch the weather forecast and prepare accordingly. This is an all-weather event. Follow the packing list in your Candidate Letter but bring weather appropriate clothing.

UPON ARRIVAL

Park in the main parking lot (to your right as you come in). There will be signs and personnel to help direct you. Medical check-in will take place in the dining hall along with event check-in.

Remember to bring the registration receipt automatically mailed to you by the BlackPug system.

You will also need to provide the following signed documents:

- Part A and Part B of your Annual Health & Medical (we need hard paper copies - do not try to upload at registration or email these). These documents will not be returned unless you make prior arrangements with the medic.

Further check-in will take place after the medical check-in (also in the dining hall) All participants will need your final payment at this time (if you do not pay in full through the registration site).

This is a BlackPug event. Payment can be made online or at camp when you check in. We accept cash, checks, or credit cards at camp.

If you pay by check, checks should be made out to: Tonkawa 99

ORDEAL COMPLETION REQUIREMENTS

By National Rule, Candidate attendance at the Ordeal is mandatory from the beginning of the pre-ordeal ceremony on Friday evening, until dismissal on Sunday after Jumpstart training. **This means that leaving camp for any reason during the Ordeal is not permitted.** The only exceptions to this rule are Health and Safety. This means that family activities, school activities, church functions, etc. are not a valid reason for leaving camp once the Ordeal has begun.

ARE PARENTS AND NON-SCOUTERS ALLOWED AT THE ORDEAL CEREMONY?

Only active, dues-paying and event registered OA members may attend ceremonies. Family members who are not OA members may not attend. Below is the national policy on this matter:

“Youth and adult candidates for membership into the Order of the Arrow are introduced to the Order’s concepts of servant leadership through a safeguarded ceremonial induction. Nonmembers should not attend the ceremonies.

Although the content of the ceremonies is private, the ceremonies were designed to avoid offending any religious belief and have received the approval of religious leaders. The ceremonies are consistent with Scouting traditions and the spirit of the Scout Oath and Law.

The Order of the Arrow recognizes and respects the right of any parent, Scout leader, or religious leader to be interested in the content of the ceremony. The lodge adviser, or his designee, may discuss the content of the ceremony and any other issue brought to his attention by one of these interested and responsible adults, with the understanding that the adult will maintain the confidentiality of the ceremony.

If after discussing the ceremony with the lodge adviser, the parent, Scout leader, or religious leader continues to have questions about the content of the ceremony, that person will be permitted to read the ceremony text and view the Order’s ceremony training DVD. Following this, parents will be able to decide whether to allow their son or daughter to participate in the ceremony. Candidates may not become members of the Order of the Arrow without completing the pre-Ordeal and Ordeal ceremonies.”