

2016 National Planning Meeting Recap



Section NE-4B

Chief Aaron Coffman

Brothers, it is an honor to be able to report back to you on my experiences at the National Planning Meeting (NPM) of the Order of the Arrow that I have just gotten back from shortly before this article. On December 27th I boarded a plane from Pittsburgh and traveled down to Dallas Texas where I meet of with Section Chiefs from all over the Nation. Once there we went out to grab a bite to eat for Dinner before the Conference Officially began. On the first night of the NPM is when all of the Section Chiefs elect the two youth to lead and represent them in the upcoming year, the Nation Chief and National Vice Chief. After many many hours, which made for a long night, we managed to elect our National Chief, Forrest Gertin hailing from the Northeast Region, Section NE-3A, and Tschipey Achtu Lodge, and our National Vice Chief Talon Parker hailing from the Southern Region, Section SR-7B, and Croatan Lodge. Both have started out their term with a very successful planning meeting!

The next Morning after a very short night's sleep all of the Section Chiefs broke off into their individual Regions where they were tasked to elect their Region's Chief. The Northeast Region elected Jon Hagenow from Section NE-2B, Tschitani Lodge to serve as the Region's 2017 Region Chief. After these elections there was countless trainings held throughout the day to inform the Chiefs about all things National has been doing to prepare for the Jamboree, inform us on proper communication (Writing this was not part of that), promote the OAHA programs, and many other things as well. Later in the day Section Chiefs were instructed on where they would be serving the following year as part of either the National Program of Emphasis, Operation Arrow, or assisting in rewriting the Lodge Leadership Development course. I was assigned to be one of the eight Chapter Chiefs to oversee a group of trek guides at the 2017 National Jamboree. To recap what this evening time consisted of for my committee, we rewrote a lot of the behind the scenes program aspects of the Trek Guide program including working on

publishing it's first newsletter, revamping the packing list, working on better forms of communications between the Trek Guides, pre-Jamboree Exercise plan to prepare the Guides for a lot of hiking, and much more. Later this evening there was a cracker barrel and everyone went to bed to get some much needed rest.

On Thursday the 29th the day for the most part was focused on finishing up a lot of the work from the night before, assigning advisors to work with all of the Section Chiefs for the Jamboree and the LLD rewrite. Towards the evening all of the Jamboree Vice Chiefs gave a report to all of the Section Chiefs and National Committee Members on what they have accomplished in their time together. Overall, the 2017 Jamboree and Operation Arrow is shaping up to be an experience of a lifetime and much better than the previous 2013 National Jamboree. As far as the LLD rewrite goes they are looking at starting completely from scratch where they will be building the LLD to better suit the issues Lodges are having now. One of the big issues they are looking to correct is how easily available it will be to get the training material out to the Lodges. The current stuff is on National's website, but some of it doesn't work properly and is just messy compared to how they are planning on revamping it. Shortly after these presentations the 2016 Region Chiefs announced Lodges that would receive a grant for 2017 and the Directors of the 4 High Adventure Bases presented briefly on the successes of OAHA in 2016 and what they were looking forward to about 2017. One thing that was stressed is that they need help promoting it. In 2016 they had record breaking numbers of participants, but they feel like that will not happen this year due to there not being a NOAC where they can personally reach thousands of youth Arrowmen. That is why we are stressing this as much as we do on a Section Level because these programs are the best experiences the OA can offer to you and at a price that you can't beat to attend a High Adventure Base especially with our Scholarship. Please continue

to promote this within your Lodges to help to keep Arrowmen coming back. One thing they mentioned and I can attest to first hand. Many Arrowmen who attend OAHA are sash and dashers that just want to go to a High Adventure base for a cheaper price. This is the absolute best thing that can happen because when they come back home the trip has renewed them within the OA showing them the true meaning to be an Arrowman in turn bring them back to more Lodge events and to other OAHA and Order of the Arrow programs. So with that all said that evening was the final cracker barrel and all of the Section Chiefs had some free time in the evening to hang out and then say their good byes before we all went to bed.

In the morning I woke up and caught my shuttle to airport around 7:30, boarded my plane around 9:50 and took off which brings me to where I am right now, on my way home in the air somewhere about half way between Dallas, Texas and Pittsburgh, Pa. I cannot thank the Section and all of those who have provided me with this honor and privilege enough for what they have done for me over the years in scouting! I am really looking forward to finishing out my term as Section Chief serving you guys, the Arrowmen of Section NE-4B, the Best Section of the Order of the Arrow. Thank you for the opportunities and I look forward to meeting with you all very soon!

Thank You for the Experience,



Aaron Coffman

Section NE-4B Chief 2016-17

