

ADVISER'S GUIDE TO ADVISING THE DANCE TEAM

Purpose:

The purpose of this outline is provide a method to coach the chairman and advisers of the Indian Dance team on:

- The role of the dance team within the lodge
- Constraints on dancing within the Order
- Working effectively with other lodge leaders
- Coaching dance team members.



ADVISER PREPARATION

Review the material in the *Order of the Arrow Handbook* on Indian Customs and Traditions. Pay particular attention to research methods and to the discussion of the twelfth point of the Scout Law in the Indian Dances' Section.

Review the most recent copies of rules for Sectional and National Indian Dance competitions and any others in which your team participates. Ask the youth lodge leader to study the *Order of the Arrow Handbook* before the coaching session.

Obtain and review copies of all of the following material:

- Previous year's dance team report.
- A council calendar for the year.
- A lodge calendar for the year.

Research the relation of the dance team to the other committees of the lodge.

Adviser's Note: The number one job in dance team administration is maintaining the proper balance between the program of the team and the program of the lodge.

Members of successful teams put in long hours. They tend to meet more regularly than any other function of the lodge. Members spend more time working on dance matters than most any other lodge leader does on his tasks. The costs of attire and the revenues available from dancing are often large. It often becomes a hobby retained long into adulthood. Participation by adult members is often much more visible. As a result dancers often get a one sided perspective on their role in the life of the lodge.

The team chairman and its advisers play a leading role in keeping the team fulfilling the purpose of the Order and the lodge. The power of constant example is the most important tool. Counseling individual members and leading group discussions may be occasionally needed. Dancers are not considered actors in the traditional sense.

However, a member who becomes a dancer when he leaves home and remains one until he returns, will inevitably do a more authentic dance. 'Method acting' textbooks have exercises which encourage this attitude. They may just be the source of the final polish the team needs to truly shine.

ADVISING METHODS

1. Review lodge leader's motivation for accepting job. Ask, "Why did you accept the job of dance team chairman? What do you hope to accomplish? How do you expect to do this?"
2. Develop fundamentals of Indian dancing in the Order.
 - a. The purpose of Indian culture work in the Order
 - i. Preserves and maintains camping traditions and spirit
 - ii. Preserves and maintains local Native American culture
 - iii. Leads Arrowmen and Scouters to a better understanding of Native Americans and their culture.
 - b. Methods of research
 - c. Concerns of local Native Americans and of Scouting
 - i. What dances and attire may not be used and why
 - ii. What costuming materials are illegal or discouraged?
 - iii. How the twelfth point of the Scout Law (respecting the religious beliefs of others) affects team decisions
 - d. Participation in competitions
3. Review Indian dance program of the lodge
 - a. Past year
 - b. Commitments for coming years
 - c. Possibilities for the future
4. Review the lodge structure for Indian dancing
 - a. Dance team membership and structure
 - b. Chapter responsibilities for dancing
 - c. Relationship to other committees
5. Review procedures within the team
 - a. How practices are scheduled including arrangements for location
 - b. How performances are booked and scheduled
 - c. How transportation is arranged
 - d. How the Youth Protection program is implemented. (Does Jay and Bill working at Bill's house on attire on their own constitute a team activity? Absolutely. So there had better be someone else around.)

5. Review procedures for working with lodge and council
 - a. Budget and financial
 - i. Where money comes from and how it is handled
 - ii. Ownership of costuming and dance equipment including the drum and special attire
 - b. Use of equipment and facilities
 - c. Contacts with professional staff
 - d. Calendar planning
 - e. Recruiting manpower
7. Set tentative team goals
 - a. Review the goal of the key three for the dance team, if any
 - b. Every Arrowman a dancer! (not a dance team member)
 - c. Growth in understanding of the chosen tribal culture and history as a whole
 - d. Growth in team and instruction of new members
 - e. Mastery of new dances and techniques
 - f. Participation in competition
 - g. Service to units and the lodge
 - h. Special and continuing projects
8. Develop strategy for achieving goals
 - a. Recruiting and training additional team members
 - b. Developing final goals and plans including budget and calendar
 - c. Securing approval of goals and plans including budget and calendar
 - d. Implementation of the plan
 - e. Recognitions and reports
9. Set personal development goals
 - a. Skills
 - i. Coaching dancers
 - ii. Teaching attire construction skills
 - iii. Method acting
 - b. Setting the example - participation in lodge activities not involving dance
 - c. Earn the Lodge Leader Development Training Award

COACHING THE DANCE TEAM

Preparation:

The purpose of this outline is to provide a method of coaching new members of the Indian Dance Team on:

- A dance they can do immediately; Indian culture used in dancing;
- The attitudes he needs to dance well.

This is a high level outline because of the vast differences among dance teams and among American Indian cultures. Fill in with details for your Indian dance team and the culture which you are studying.

Typically, Indian Dance team members are coached over a period of time starting with their first meeting. This outline may be expanded into a class for beginners at a lodge activity.

Review the material in the *Order of the Arrow Handbook* on Indian Customs and Traditions. Pay particular attention to the discussion of the twelfth point of the Scout Law in the 'Indian Dances' section.

If your dance team regularly participates in Section or National Competitions obtain copies of the most recent set of rules. They change from time to time, but the most recent set is a good starting point. **(Rules for each National Conference are typically available in the spring before the conference.)**

At his first meeting, ask the new dancer to study the *Order of the Arrow Handbook on Indian Customs and Traditions* before his next meeting.

Prepare a reading list on your selected culture and other aspects of American Indian culture. Make sure that each selection is authentic. (See warning in the *Order of the Arrow Handbook*.) Present this to the team member at his second or third meeting.

Adviser's Note: Make a copy of your outline for each new dancer as a permanent record of his progress and coaching. Check off each item as he completes it. Make other notes of his progress.

COACHING METHODS

1. First meeting

- a. Ask 'why are you here?' Get lodge leader to discuss what he hopes to accomplish personally and as a member of the team.
- b. Teach him a simple dance step using show-and-do. Get him dancing as soon as possible.

2. Preliminary understandings for the second meeting

- a. Discuss the role of Indian dancing in the Order.
 - i. Reasons for dancing
 - (1) Help maintain camping traditions and spirit.
 - (2) Help preserve authentic Native American culture both for its intrinsic value and for its association with camping and the out of doors.
 - ii. The dance team does not run the lodge and is only a secondary activity. Most everything else is more important.
- b. Discuss what is expected of a team member
 - i. Attendance at practices
 - ii. Attendance at performances
 - iii. Preparation of personal attire
 - iii. Use of dance team (lodge) property
 - v. Financial arrangements
 - vi. Participation in competitions

3. Advanced understandings for the third meeting

- a. Discuss research methods used by team members (refer to the *Order of the Arrow Handbook* and National Order of the Arrow Indian Dance Competition rules)
- b. Discuss the vast diversity of Native Americans across the continent and across the decades.
- c. Point out that 'Hollywood Indians' were invented for the purpose of making movies.
- d. Discuss the concerns of local Native Americans and the Order
 - i. How the dance team observes the twelfth point of the Scout Law
 - ii. The difference, if any, between social and religious dances. (Some cultures do not make the modern American distinction between the sacred and the secular; others do.)
 - ii. Dances and attire which can not be used

4. Learning the culture (a little bit at every meeting)

- a. The culture and time period used by the team
- b. Individual dancing:
 - i. Steps
 - ii. Body posture, hand and arm movements, facial expression
 - iii. Specific dances
- c. Attire:
 - i. Construction methods
 - (1) Sewing especially treatment of hems and seams
 - (2) Bead and quill work
 - (3) Feather work
 - ii. Sources of materials (emphasize the high penalties associated using illegal ones such as song bird feathers!)
 - iii. The basic outfit (starting with under garments!)
 - iv. Other items worn or carried
- d. Body carriage and actions, when not dancing
- e. Makeup
- f. Singing and drumming
- g. Team dances
- h. Putting on and staying in the 'role.' While Indian dancing is not acting in the traditional sense, the dancer is acting out a role in a different culture. The more he becomes a dancer in the culture when he puts on his attire, the more authentic his performance will be.

APPENDIX: SOURCE MATERIAL AND RESOURCES**Field Operations Guide**

<http://www.oa-bsa.org/resources/pubs/fog/>

Order of the Arrow Handbook #34996C, Revised 2002*

Guide for Officers and Advisers #34997B, Revised 2002*

**Available from the BSA National Supply Division, must be ordered through your local council.*