



Message from the National Chief

I have been trying for over a month to think of a way to describe the NOAC experience to Arrowmen that have never been to one before, and I finally realized there would be no way for me to convey the feeling of a National OA Conference in words.

I could vividly describe the moment I stepped into the arena for the opening show of my first NOAC--the vibrant energy that filled the air as thousands of Arrowmen of all ages and from across our nation shared a kind of ecstatic camaraderie that I have experienced in few other settings. I could talk about how the classes I attended about OA ceremonies inspired me to become the ceremonies chairman of my lodge, my first real leadership position in the Order. I could focus on the new friends I met, the patches I traded, or the frisbee games I played.

But my NOAC experience would be irrelevant to you, because your NOAC experience will invariably be different. That's the incredible thing about a National OA Conference--there is such a cornucopia of activity that one person could not possibly do everything. Everyone's NOAC is both an individual experience and a collective experience.

And, more importantly, the reason why I won't focus on describing the details of my first NOAC is because none of that would accurately express the emotional joy of the event. The reason a NOAC is great is not because you spend your week doing certain activities. Conferences are incredible because they allow you to be a part of a group of thousands of Arrowmen that collectively embody our cheerful brotherhood.

For me, NOAC is an event where even something as silly as encountering a man in a bear suit walking around the Michigan State at night becomes a moment that you'll remember for the rest of your life.

Yours in Service,

Jonathan Hillis

National Chief