

THE TALE OF Akela's Staff

by Don DeYoung

The following Pack project is one of those rare opportunities for your entire pack to share in an experience that pins the spirituality of nature with the Cub Scouting experience. It starts with a ceremony presented by the Cubmaster at Pack meeting early in the Scouting year. Then, each Den participates in the project during the year and finally the project ends at a campfire ceremony during your family camping experience at the conclusion of the Scouting year. That is required is that Akela become familiar with the true story, and that he/she find a staff during a personal journey in the wilderness. The description and content of the story should be modified to match local customs and your staff general appearance.

PRESENT OF THE STAFF

Akela speaks)

Many seasons ago, the Great Spirit decided to give the Webelos Tribe a small gift. He asked one of Mother Earth's great alder trees to produce a strong walking staff suitable for the Great Akela, chief of the Webelos Tribe.

Not wanting to disappoint the Great Spirit, the mightiest of the alder trees set out to create the staff as one of her branches. Many seasons passed as the alder produced the strongest, most well-formed and balanced branch that she could. It was truly a fine staff, suitable for Akela, chief of the Webelos.

When Mighty Alder had completed her task, she summoned the Wood-bore from the forest to decorate her staff in a manner that would please the Great Spirit. Using her strong jaws, the Wood-bore shaped and molded the staff. She created the swirling and ever-changing patterns of nature along its entire length.

When Wood-bore had completed her fine work, she removed the branch from Mighty Alder, and set it out upon the strong currents of the river named Stanislaus, on its long journey to the Webelos tribe.

Stanislaus felt honored to be the one chosen to deliver the staff to Akela. He 'did his best' to finely smooth the staff that Mighty Alder and Wood-bore had created.

He carried it in his currents beyond the canyon of the Mi Wok, and into the path of Akela as he walked the river's shore in search of wily Rainbows.

When Akela saw the staff, he immediately recognized it as a gift from the Great Spirit. The fine work of Mighty Alder, Wood-bore, and Stanislaus had formed a staff like no other. He plucked the staff from the surging Stanislaus, and returned it to the tribal lodge of the Webelos.

Akela was humbled by this fine gift and wanted to give the Great Spirit a gift in return but could think of nothing as fine as this wonderful staff.

And so it was that Akela asked his Tigers, Wolves, Bears, and Webelos to continue the work that Mighty Alder, Wood-bore, and Stanislaus had begun. For he could think of no greater gift than to return the Staff of Akela to the Great Spirit... carrying upon it the mark of the Webelos Tribe. *(and fixer e mox)*

A GIFT FOR THE GREAT SPIRIT: THE RETURN OF THE STAFF

(Setting: Cubs and families gather around a roaring summer campfire)

Akela)

The seasons have passed, and the Earth is again warmed by the Great Spirit's fire. Small trout fill the streams, and the young fawns follow their parents in search of new clover blooms. Now too, the Webelos Tribe gathers here in Mother Earth's forest to present our gift to the Great Spirit. Would the tribal elders please bring our gift forward.

(Tribal leaders or parents bring Akela's Staff forward)

Many moons have crossed the heavens since the Great Spirit has given us this wonderful gift, borne of Mother Earth. During this time, our braves have worked hard to follow the path of Akela. They have shared in many adventures, and have learned many new things.

And, as we search our souls, we can see that our spirits have grown too. We have a better understanding of our Earth, and her nature, and how all living things are a part of her, and are also a part of us. We can now see that God, the Great

Spirit, has placed us all on Mother Earth so that we might learn of her wonders and prove our worthiness to him, our families, and to each other.

Akela holds staff)

During these past months, we have prepared this special gift. It is the Staff of Akela, Chief of the Webelos Tribe. We have proudly added to it the symbols of each of our Dens... and ourselves. It now contains a small piece of our spirit. It symbolizes that which we are, and that which we will be...

We present it to you now, and in doing so, we complete a circle of nature.

Akela carefully places the staff into the fire)

I would like all of our Cubs to raise their hands showing the Cub Scout Sign, and recite the "Law of the Pack" with me:

*The Cub Scout follows Akela.
The Cub Scout helps the pack grow.
The pack helps the Cub Scout grow.
The Cub Scout gives goodwill.*

Akela asks for a moment of silence, and returns to his seat.

Preparing the Staff IN YOUR DEN

(Activity for each Den in your Pack)

Each month, Akela will honor a Den with the Staff of Akela at a Pack meeting. To choose the Den, Akela will ask the assembled Pack a question regarding some aspect of the story or about Cub Scouting in general. The Cub that successfully answers the question will be ceremoniously awarded the staff to bring back to his Den brothers. The members of that Den should then seek to add their mark the work of Great Alder, Wood-bore, and Stanislaus during the coming month's Den meetings.

Some guidelines in preparing the staff.

- ✗ Remember the objective of this project is to add the spirit of your Den to the staff.
- ✗ Let the boys decide how to decorate the staff, and perform the work themselves.
- ✗ Make it simple.
- ✗ Fit the job into an advancement exercise for the following:

WOLF

Achievement 5 – "Tools for fixing and building"
Elective 3 – "Make it yourself"
Elective 10 – "Native American Lore"

BEAR

Achievement 19 – "Shavings and Chips" and "Whittling Chip"
Achievement 20 – "Sawdust and Nails"
Achievement 22 – "Tying it all up"
Elective 9 – "Art"

WEBELOS

Craftsman (tools)
Outdoorsman (knots)

- ✗ Focus the Cubs on natural decorations, i.e. leather thongs, wood beads, shells, feathers, etc.
- ✗ A little paint is OK, but NOT a lot.
- ✗ Supervised whittling is OK for Bears that have earned the Whittling Chip card.
- ✗ Supervised decoration with a wood burning tool is also OK.
- ✗ If you forget to bring it back the Council Fire, you will have to deal with the Great Spirit yourself!

After performing their work on the staff, the Den's braves should present it back to Akela at the next tribal council of the Webelos Tribe (the Pack meeting). This should be done with a simple ceremony composed by the Den. Akela will then pass it on to another Den until all Dens have had a chance to work on the staff.

CLOSING

On the morning following the campfire ceremony, some of the ashes from the campfire may be collected and packaged in small containers such as leather satchels or film containers. At the next Pack meeting the ashes can be presented to each boy as a symbol of his participation.

Don De Young is the Cubmaster of Mt. Diablo Silverado Council's Pack 215 in Walnut Creek, CA. He is also the webmaster of the "Cub Scout Handbook" at <http://www.geocities.com/~pack215>. Don can be reached at: baden@value.net



CUB SCOUT BOOKS
FOR YOUR
PACK AND DEN

1-800-SCOUTER
<http://www.SCOUTER.com/orderform>



Pow-Wow Rom!

More than 7,500 pages of material from 20+ years of Pow Wow books and other resources, indexed and accessible in seconds. CD-ROM that runs under Windows® 3.1x, 95 or NT.

Item #CUBCD \$29.95

Webelos Resource Book

From the Utah National Parks Council comes this incredible resource, filled with a years' worth of ideas for running a Webelos den. No Webelos leader should be without this essential guide. This book has become our most popular Cub Scout Book.

Item #1200 \$11.95



Clip-it for Cub Scouts

No need for a computer or desktop publishing software...this guide is great because it is packed with hundreds of unique camera ready clip art sketches you can cut and paste right onto your newsletter, flyer or awards.

Item #1751 \$7.95

Scouter Cub Den Doodles

Charts great for tracking cub achievements.

Item #1756 \$2.95

Cub Scout Song Book

Dozens of Cub Scout specific songs.

Item #1755 \$2.95

Den Meeting Kit: Wolf & Bear Vol. 1

Item #1752 \$12.95

Den Meeting Kit: Webelos Vol. 1

Item #1753 \$13.95

Scouter Den Ceremonies Kit

Item #1754 \$12.95