



Sea Scouting –Frequently Asked Questions

Real questions. Real answers.

Sea Scouts. What's that?

Sea Scouting started in England in 1911 and was brought to the United States in 1912. For decades, it existed as its own program in the BSA and then became part of the Exploring program in 1949. Since 1998, Sea Scouts has been part of the Venturing program, under the guidance of the Boy Scouts of America.

Do I have to know how to sail?

No. I joined Sea Scouts because I wanted to attend the U.S. Naval Academy. I cared nothing about sailing. My mind was sure changed, though, and I learned how to sail with my ship. In fact, Bill Koch, winner of the 1992 America's Cup, attributes his learning how to sail to reading the Sea Scout manual a youth.

Boats are expensive. Is it required to have one?

Absolutely not. There are many ships without their own boats. I personally know of several. Access to a boat is necessary, though, in getting through your rank advancement towards Quartermaster. I would also add that those Sea Scout ships without their own boats do everything they can to get time on the water by borrowing boats.

Girls? In scouts?

Just like the regular Venturing program, Sea Scouts is a co-ed program. However, it is up to each ship to determine whether it is going to be co-ed or only male/female.

Quartermaster?

The highest rank in Sea Scouting-equivalent to the Eagle and Silver Awards. I have talked to countless individuals that have earned all three awards or a combination of Quartermaster and Eagle or Silver. I have asked which award meant more to them in terms of accomplishment and all have answered "Quartermaster". They often say they give this response because "getting your Quartermaster prepares you for all sorts of situations that require responsibility, knowledge, leadership, and skill." The idea behind the award is that after completion, you should have the skills to sit for a Coast Guard exam and pass, getting your Captains' license.

I am a Venturer. Can I get the Quartermaster award?

That depends. If you are a registered member of a Sea Scout ship you may earn the award. If you are not a registered Sea Scout, you can not. However, you may only earn the Sea Scout Bronze award as a Venturer.

William I. Koch International Sea Scout Cup

This event, sponsored by Bill Koch, is an International Sea Scout regatta where up to forty teams compete to distinguish themselves as the best. The winners of the Koch Cup earn the distinction of hoisting a replica of the Auld Mug (the America's Cup) above their heads and celebrate victory. The last one was held in July of 2006 in Miami at the Coral Reef Yacht Club. The next is slated for the summer of 2008 and will be held at the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland. Visit seascoutcup.org for more details and pictures.

I know of famous, successful people who have been Boy Scouts. Who has been a Sea Scout?

James A. Lovell, Commander of Apollo 13.

Peter and Olaf Harken, founders of Harken, makers racing gear for sailboats.

Dawn Riley, one female to win the America's Cup.

These are just the ones I know off the top of my head. There are more, I assure you.

-David George

Sea Scout National Boatswain

Any more questions? You can reach me at National_Boatswain@yahoo.com

Interested in learning about Sea Scouting, go to seascout.org or contact your local council