Pioneering Program Feature Critique

Scouts AND Scouters need correct information and directions, along with the wherewithal so they are assured of experiencing success in pioneering activities. They don't need incomplete or faulty resources which can lead to confusion, frustration, and that invariably inhibit an outcome that is memorable and fun.

Page 12-3, Square Lashing: don't we know yet that in lieu of, or at least in addition to the traditional method, there should be a presentation of the Mark II Square Lashing? It's easier, faster, and preferred by most. Most importantly, the Scouts like it much better! http://scoutpioneering.com/videos/lashing-videos/square-lashing/

Page 12-3, Shear Lashing: If you applied the lashing in this manner, it would invariably be too loose and the structure would fall apart. Our Scouts don't need that! Also, the drawing illustrates a Shear Lashing with racking turns, and the instructions describe a Shear Lashing with plain turns. The instructions are also misguided and incorrect! Step 2 is inaccurate and should read, "Make eight to ten wrapping turns around the poles, and then two tight fraps. http://scoutpioneering.com/videos/lashing-videos/shear-lashing/

Page 12-3, Diagonal Lashing: The first sentence is incorrect. The Diagonal Lashing gets its name from the fact that the wrapping turns cross the poles diagonally. It's used when there is a need to close a gap between two spars where they cross each other but do not touch. The information in the last part of Step 2, though commonly presented is not preferred. It's better to take the first wrapping turn around the opposite diagonal to the Timber Hitch. The illustration is also misleading in that the Clove Hitch isn't snugged against the lashing, which can easily lead to loosening. http://scoutpioneering.com/videos/lashing-videos/diagonal-lashing/

Page 12-3, Tripod Lashing: the drawing depicts a Tripod Lashing with racking turns, and the text describes plain turns. But mainly, the method of tying a Tripod Lashing described in the instructions, with the butt ends of the poles facing different directions, has been debunked for many years. When tied this way, it's very difficult to get the lashing to work. Scouts need to experience success, not be subjected to unnecessary frustration. http://scoutpioneering.com/videos/lashing-videos/tripod-lashing/

Page 12-4, Floor Lashing: the steps are wrong and the drawing is confusing. How can anyone understand how to do the lashing with such faulty instructions? I've literally seen Scouts refer to these same directions in the current Handbook and Pioneering Merit Badge Pamphlet, and scratch their heads in befuddlement. The following clarifying steps are from the most recent Handbook revisions submitted for this lashing:

Step 1 — Lay the floor poles side by side on top of the platform support (poles). Tie a clove hitch around one platform support, wrapping the rope's short tail around the rope's long part.

Step 2 — Bend the standing part of the rope over the first floor pole on the inside of the platform support. Pull the bend of rope under the platform support and cast it over the same floor pole on the outside of the platform support.

Step 3 — Pull the rope tight, then bend it over the next floor pole. Continue until all floor poles are bound to the platform support.

Step 4 — After attaching the last floor pole, finish the lashing with a clove hitch around the platform support (pole).

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To improve the clarity, this particular lashing really requires more than just a half column of space! Revealing video: http://scoutpioneering.com/videos/lashing-videos/floor-lashing/

Page 12-5, Crossing the Alligator Pit: After presenting this challenge again and again, you come to some necessary conclusions. First of all, the equipment described is radically wrong. To make this activity work, the Scouts really need two 8' spars, and one 6' spar, sensibly with the same diameter they use to build a Double A-Frame Monkey Bridge. http://scoutpioneering.com/2012/12/27/double-a-frame-monkey-bridge/ The lashing ropes NEED to be 12-1/2 to 15' long. (15' is the average length for most full-fledged lashing projects.) 6' is preposterous! The crossbar is NOT lashed with a Diagonal Lashing! Of course a Scout who knows how to lash properly would use a Square Lashing. Finally, six guy lines just work better, two at the top and four on the bottom. http://scoutpioneering.com/2013/02/24/indoor-challenge-crossing-the-alligator-pit/ View the action video! https://vimeo.com/116676320

Page 12-5, Heave the Lightweight: unless the tripod legs are healed into the ground, without cross braces connecting the tripod legs, Scouts will need to be instructed to make sure three patrol members push on the legs so the tripod doesn't collapse. By the way, a Bowline on a Bight is not part of the included instruction in this program feature. A much better activity would be Everyone on the Tripod! http://scoutpioneering.com/2013/02/22/indoor-challenge-everyone-on-the-tripod/ Super video! https://vimeo.com/116516507

Page 12-5, Fireman, Save the Child! The diameter of the ladder rungs need to be at least 2"! Depending on the wood, anything less can be dangerous. 1/2" ropes are mighty thick for this application. Unless a heavy Scout is jumping up and down on the rope ladder. 1/4" manila is sufficient and much easier to work with.

Page 12-5, Flagpole Raising: sash cord? If you're going to do Pioneering and build camp gadgets, might as well have 6' lengths of 1/4" manila (whipped on both ends).

Page 12-6 - 12-10, Generally speaking, this material can be much more relevant and a whole lot more fun, related to the actual "Pionengineering" weekend. Skills instruction should be presented for the skills needed to build the troop or patrol pioneering project. The meeting material needs to include learning these skills and then putting them into action in a way that is involving and fun, and at the same time illustrates how they're used. Once again, the instruction and activities need to incorporate the skills that will come into play when building the kind of pioneering structures that are appropriate for the experience level of the Scouts involved. Four troop meetings are adequate enough to present the skills and activities that are relevant to the outing. http://scoutpioneering.com/unit-pioneering-curriculum/ http://scoutpioneering.com/favorite-troop-meeting-challenges/

Page 12-12, of course it's obvious that a bunch of this material was taken from older sources. If you must provide a list of projects to research, a list should include projects

that are realistic and attainable. There's a workable, four-week, stepwise progression culminating in any troop building it's first Double A-Frame Monkey Bridge, but, plans for signal towers are for now all too tall, and try as I will, I can't envision even Adolph Peschke's "Boy-Sized" 14' Double Ladder Signal Tower hooked with belay lines. Why was an Hourglass Tower even mentioned? Of course as a troop project, when the required materials are on hand, and if the Scouts have the necessary skill set, a host of ambitious projects can be incorporated into this program feature. Then, the sky's the limit! http://scoutpioneering.com/favorite-larger-projects/ http://scoutpioneering.com/favorite-projects/