

## **MARCH – GENERATIONAL DIVERSITY**

### **Music Full then Under**

LEE: Welcome to ScoutCast for March, everyone. I'm Lee Shaw, Team Lead of National Alliance. Joining me is *Scouting* magazine blogger, Bryan Wendell. We're so glad you stopped by.

BRYAN: Yes, we are. Great to see you, Lee, and in this episode, we'll be exploring generational diversity and the role it plays in your Scout Troop or Venturing Crew.

LEE: Hmm. What is generational diversity, you might ask?

### **Music Fades**

LEE: Well, we're about to find out. Pat Wellen is the manager for the Research and Strategy Team at the National Service Center, and with everything I know about her, she is quite the expert in this field, so welcome to ScoutCast, Pat. We're glad to have you on our show.

PAT: Thanks, Lee.

LEE: Okay, Pat, let's get started here. When we talk about geniverse –I'm making up words now. Generational diversity is a fancy term for what, exactly?

PAT: It's really a group of people that share similar life experiences, and so those experiences make them look at the world in a certain way and have certain expectations.

BRYAN: There's a whole presentation on this in Wood Badge, I remember, was pretty great. It talks about all the different generations we have. So is there a specific count to the number of generations we have in the United States? Is anybody tracking that?

PAT: Okay. Currently there are five generations. I'm just going to give you some generalizations about the ages of these. We have Traditionalists, which are in their 70s generally, Boomers who are in their 50s, Xers who are in their 30s and 40s, Millennials who are generally in their 20s, and Generation Z who is under 20, and they're our kids that are in our program today. We'll really talk about the Xers and the Boomers because they are really the parents of your Boy Scout-age group right now and the leaders that are in our Boy Scout program.

LEE: So why is it important for a Scoutmaster or a Crew Advisor to know about the different generations?

PAT: Because they are trying to meet different expectations. They have a lot of different people that they're serving that can bring into this their own experiences and their own expectations. If they don't understand the differences between generations, they don't always communicate effectively or work effectively with others.

BRYAN: So do you have an example of what that would look like in a troop or a crew, like those different expectations that people have coming in based on their generational biases you might say?

PAT: Yeah. So one of the common ones that I see whenever I go out to troops is that it will be being led by a bunch of Boomers. Boomers love to make processes and love to do things the same way they have always been done. They're kind of resistant to change sometimes because it's worked for them, this process that they've made. Then they ask an Xer to step up or they don't really ask an Xer, they just kind of tell 'em that we need your help and they have them step up and then the Xer can't do anything right. Because Xers, on the other hand, are more individualistic and don't necessarily want to follow the same thing but want to change things a lot of times and they hit that Boomer resistance. And then, you know what? They don't want to volunteer again because they were given this job and felt like I should be able to do what I want to do in this job and then you're telling me what to do, so why am I ever going to volunteer again?

BRYAN: And then we've lost them for good, yeah.

PAT: They'll leave your troop or they'll go searching for another troop.

LEE: This is very interesting. Pat, can you provide another illustration of how a Scoutmaster or Advisor would use this knowledge?

PAT: Yes, I can. Another thing that I see in troops is that a lot of times the Boomers feel like the Xers won't step up to the plate. They don't volunteer for anything. That's actually a myth. They want to be asked to take on a role. So one of the things we have in Scouting is the talent form that you have the parents fill out. Sometimes the leaders use that as "the ask." They think by you filling that up they've asked you and that you'll just come up and say, "Hey, I want to do this." That's probably not going to happen with an Xer. So they can use this talent form to identify what that Xer is interested in and then go make that personal ask. And here is the thing you've got to remember, once you make that ask, let them do it how

they want but be there to support them. Because just because they're individualistic and want to do things themselves does not mean they are not looking for support from you too.

LEE: That's great insight, Pat. Is there any resources available that could help Scoutmasters out and Advisors out just to kind of get an understanding of the different generations?

PAT: Yes. We have some on [Scouting.org/about](https://www.scouting.org/about), and then on the left-hand side of that web page, you're going to see ethnic and generational diversity. Click there and you'll see a variety of resources; some PowerPoints and some other things. There's also some information on Millennials. We haven't really talked about them and everybody's really cares about Millennials right now, but what you need to keep in mind is right now the parents that are in Boy Scouting and Venturing are Boomers and Xers. Those Millennials are just now coming in as parents to Cub Scouting.

LEE: Okay, good.

BRYAN: So we'll be talking about that on a future episode maybe a few years from now. (Laughs)

PAT: Probably about five years you'll be having them. (Laughs)

BRYAN: So that's [scouting.org/about](https://www.scouting.org/about). Now, some of this is just the fear that people have about something new and something different, so maybe in their job and at home they work only with Boomers or only with fellow Gen-Xers. So, how much of it is just getting over that initial hump and just saying, "Okay, this is the makeup of the Scout leaders in my troop and this is something I'm going to need to embrace," because it really does, as you

said, it really does add value to your unit to have that generational diversity.

PAT: It does because it brings in those different perspectives, and while it's great to have traditions in Scouting and all, it's also good to embrace new things and to move forward. We're all here for the youth that are in our programs – so it helps include them and include their parents, which is really important in Scouting that we embrace that diversity and inclusion.

BRYAN: Absolutely, yeah, I agree.

LEE: This has really been a helpful for me. I'm trying to figure out exactly where I fall in line of the generations, but... is there anything else about generational diversity that we haven't talked about that you think we ought to share with our listeners?

PAT: One of the things that whenever I'm teaching about generational diversity that I usually add in is remember the Golden Rule?

LEE: Yes.

BRYAN: Do unto others, yeah.

PAT: As you would have them do unto you. Sometimes what we want done to us may not be what the other generation wants done with them. So maybe we kick it up a notch and we use the Platinum Rule, and that is: treat others as they would like to be treated. And that requires us to know more about the different generations, to go out there and learn about them so that we can see what their expectations are and understand that, and understand the life experiences that cause them to have those expectations.

BRYAN: That's great, yeah, because the Golden Rule just assumes that everybody is like you. The Platinum Rule knows that the opposite is true, right, that everybody is different. That's awesome. I never heard of that Platinum Rule.

LEE: I haven't either.

BRYAN: I'm writing that down actually.

LEE: So I gotta tell you, Pat. I love these episodes that make you stop and think. It's often intriguing to hear or learn about how others perceive the same thing that you see but they may perceive that in a different way. And I just appreciate you coming on and sharing with our audience just how valuable that would be, how difficult it can sometimes be, but how rewarding it will be, so we really thank you.

PAT: You're welcome. Thanks for having me on your show.

BRYAN: Yeah. This has been a great one. Thanks again, Pat, and to all of you listening, don't go anywhere because Reminders and Tips are coming up right after our new segment – Safety Moment.

**(Safety Moment – [Medical Records](#))**

BRYAN: And now the promised Reminders and Tips. It's March so be sure to start finalizing details for your summer camping opportunities. Make sure you have all the equipment checked out so that everything is working properly.

You don't want to find out once you get to camp. Also, be sure that each Scout is current on his scheduled camp payments.

LEE: If you haven't already done so, be sure that everyone has their proper training. Hazardous Weather Training is required by at least one person before any campout. Other trainings such as Safe Swim Defense and Safety Afloat may be required depending on your activities. Contact your local council for training dates.

BRYAN: Okay, listeners, are you ready to go the distance? If your troop is planning a long-distance trek, your first stop should be the March-April 2017 issue of *Scouting* magazine. Inside you'll find tips for preparing for a long trek and suggestions about quality but affordable backpacking gear. And the March issue of *Boys' Life* gives you a head-start on the upcoming summer video contest.

LEE: And I have one question. It's really just one last thing. Have you supported your council financially? Be sure to participate in a Friends of Scouting, or FOS, campaign or other fundraiser. Remember, financial donations don't always mean cold, hard cash, so see what gifts in-kind you may be able to provide.

### **Begin Music Under**

LEE: So now our March episode comes to an end. Thanks to our guest, Pat Wellen.

BRYAN: And thanks for listening, everyone. Come back next month for everything – and I mean everything – you need to know about annual program

planning and building your budget. That's a timely one. With that, I'm Bryan Wendell.

LEE: And I'm Lee Shaw. Don't forget you can send us your ideas and comments to [Scoutcast@Scouting.org](mailto:Scoutcast@Scouting.org) or a tweet to @bsaScoutcast. You'll be glad you did.

**Music full to finish**