

Soaring News

News on advancement for the Susquehanna Council

Edition 19-2

April 2019

This newsletter is prepared by the Susquehanna Council Advancement committee as a resource for leaders of cub scout and boy scout units and merit badge counselors. Its purpose is to provide current information on changes regarding advancement, as well as clarifications of advancement requirements and tips, reminders, and guidelines on advancement.

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New Council website – new and expanded Advancement pages

The Susquehanna Council created a new website in September 2018 to improve the council's capability to provide information to everyone in the council. Check it out at this [link](#). The Advancement pages can be accessed from the "MORE" drop-down menu. The council continues to make improvements to the site.

The **Council Advancement Committee is very excited to announce that in January we finished a complete overhaul of the advancement pages on the Council's website. We think that you will find it organized to more intuitively find information and provide access to a significant amount of current information and forms.**

Here is a link directly to the council's Advancement pages {[click here](#)}.

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We are continuing to update and add content so keep checking the site to find answers to your advancement questions and access current information on advancement. Suggestions are welcome (such as adding information) – send to Steve Guthrie [his contact info is on the website].

We highly encourage Scouts, adult leaders, MB counselors, and parents in the council to make it their go-to source to find and obtain information regarding advancement in the Scouting program.

Scoutbook

Online Tool for Managing Advancement for all units [*Article from Advancement News, March-April 2019*]

As of January 1, 2019 Scoutbook, the Boy Scouts of America online tool for managing and tracking Scouting advancements, is **Free**.

What does this mean for your unit? Units will no longer need to utilize Internet Advancement to enter their advancement records. Rest assured, Internet Advancement will not be going away at this time. The Boy Scouts of America is however, encouraging all Units to setup and utilize Scoutbook as their main unit management tool. Any advancement entered via Internet Advancement will sync to Scoutbook and can be seen by the unit, parents, and Scouts.

BSA will begin upgrading Scoutbook this year. The initial change will include a profile, unit roster, advancement 'quick entry' feature, and reports. Additional modifications will be phased in throughout the year and users will have access to both the new and old features using their current login credentials. The current platform will continue to be supported and maintained. As changes are implemented, communication will be posted in the Change Logs on the Scoutbook Forums.

Where can I get more information about this change in Scoutbook?

- Keep an eye on Scoutbook.com for all the latest updates.
- If you still have questions, you can always contact the friendly and helpful folks at Scoutbook support. Their email: Scoutbook.support@scouting.org.

Guide to Advancement 2019

GTA 2019: The Official Source for All Advancement [*Article from Advancement News, March-April 2019*]

"The current edition of the *Guide to Advancement* is the official source for administering advancement in all Boy Scouts of America programs: Cub Scouting, Scouts BSA, Venturing, and Sea Scouts. It replaces any previous BSA advancement manuals and previous editions of the Guide to Advancement." (GTA Topic 1.0.0.0)

The *Guide to Advancement* is updated periodically in response to changes to programs, requirements, and policies, as well as comments and recommendations received by the National Advancement Program Team. The *Guide to Advancement 2019* is now the "current edition." It can be found online at www.scouting.org/advancement in both HTML and PDF format. Printed copies will soon be available in your local Scout shop for purchase, if they are not already

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there, but when shopping note that the SKU is 648216, and the publication number, 33088, has not changed, so be sure to ask for the *Guide to Advancement 2019*.

The 2019 edition replaces all previous editions of the *GTA* and any other advancement manuals. It is the source for all advancement policies and procedures and, unless specifically exempted, it supersedes any BSA publications that may conflict with it. Every section of the 2019 guide has received some minor revisions since the last printed edition, primarily to reflect the addition of female youth to Cub Scouting and Scouts BSA. The following topics merit close review:

General - Revisions have been made throughout this guide to make clear that all guidance and requirements of the rank advancement and awards programs apply equally to male and female Scouts. All references to the Varsity program have been removed, except when past participation in a Varsity team could be relevant, such as service in a position of responsibility. To reflect the Bylaws of the Boy Scouts of America, the objectives of Scouting, otherwise known as the aims, have been modified wherever they appear to include character development, citizenship training, leadership, and mental and physical fitness. When used throughout this guide, *Scouts BSA Handbook* refers to both the *Scouts BSA Handbook for Boys* and the *Scouts BSA Handbook for Girls*.

Section 1 - Three frequently asked questions about special needs Scouting were added.

Section 3 - The educational presentation summaries were removed. However, updated presentations are still available at <https://www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/resources/advancement-presentations/>. The National Advancement Program Team strongly recommends that unit leaders and volunteers review those presentations.

Section 4 - For Cub Scouting, changes were made to reflect adding the Lion rank. Essentially all references to the Varsity Scouting program have been removed. For Scouts BSA, the *Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook* was added to the list of items that may *not* be required for a unit leader conference for the Eagle Scout rank. For Venturing and Sea Scouts, clarifications were added concerning conducting Scouts BSA boards of review, processing Summit Award applications, and processing Quartermaster rank applications.

Section 7 - Revised to reflect current registered adult leadership requirements as stated in the *Guide to Safe Scouting* and in BSA social media guidelines.

Section 8 - Added clarification about the scheduling of boards of review under disputed circumstances.

Section 11 - Removed the listing of Advancement and Recognition Literature and Resources from the guide.

A complete list of the changes to the *Guide to Advancement 2019* can be found in Section 1.0.3.0 beginning on Page 7. However, it would be wise to consider carefully reviewing all those sections that impact your Scouting responsibilities.

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Cub Scout rank advancement

➤ **The Learn Center: Home of Improved Online Training for Cub Scout Volunteers** [Article from *Advancement News*, March-April 2019]

Wow! Go to My.Scouting.Org and click on the Learn Center. You'll see an updated catalog of, simplified, succinct, topic-specific training modules for Cub Scout volunteers. In all, there are approximately 20 modules, and more may be added later.

Volunteers can now complete their training at a time and location (at home!) that is most convenient for them. The courses themselves are separated into tracks: one for den leaders and assistants; one for Cubmasters; and one for pack committee members. The modules are of varying lengths, some taking only a few minutes to complete. They can be taken individually, or, time permitting, one right after another. They can be accessed via computer or mobile device, including a smartphone. Completion of the required modules in each track will be recorded in the training record of each volunteer within the Learn Center. Completion of the track will qualify the volunteer to wear the "Trained" patch for their volunteer position.

Here is an example scenario: A new den leader or assistant who wants to know what to do before that all important first meeting can click on *Before the First Meeting*. There they will see several training modules that will be helpful, including *How to Conduct a Cub Scout Den Meeting*. Subsequent modules pertain to den management, how to involve adults to assist in Cub Scouting, childhood development, Cub Scout pack finances, keeping Cub Scouting safe, how to conduct a Cub Scout pack meeting, and many more.

- **Earning Arrow of Light.** An important reminder for any Cub Scout that seeks to earn the Arrow of Light. The Scout must complete all of the requirements and the award of the rank is recorded as a Cub Scout before the scout is registered as a Scouts BSA member. It is suggested that award of the rank is complete before a crossover ceremony. However, since the crossover ceremony is just an event and may take place before the Scout is registered as a Scouts BSA member, the key is to make sure the rank is awarded before registration as a Scouts BSA member. If the rank is not awarded before registering as a Scouts BSA member and once a Scout transfers from a pack to a troop, it is not possible to retroactively award the Arrow of Light.

Boy Scout rank advancement

- **Scouts BSA – temporary transition rules.** [from Implementation Details for Females Entering Scouts BSA prepared by BSA National]

On February 1, 2019, the Boy Scouts of America will begin admitting girls into Scouts BSA (formerly the Boy Scout program). One of the characteristics of Scouting—for over a hundred years—is that no matter when you join, however long you stay, or the rank you attain, the Scouting experience prepares you for life. And for some, the pinnacle of their Scouting experience is achieving the highest rank of Eagle Scout.

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The policies of the BSA indicate that, except in extraordinary circumstances, a youth desiring to achieve the rank of Eagle must do so before the youth's 18th birthday. This will continue to be our policy.

It is in the interests of the entire BSA, and in fact our nation, that all girls who join the BSA in 2019 should have an opportunity to earn their Eagle badge should they diligently and promptly complete all requirements. Accordingly, after carefully considering recommendations from stakeholders, including feedback from volunteers and professionals at the 2018 Top Hands Meeting, the National Executive Committee of the Boy Scouts of America has approved the following temporary transition rules regarding extensions for youth over 16 but not yet 18 years of age on February 1, 2019 to complete the requirements for the Eagle Scout award.

To preserve the integrity of the Eagle Scout Award, no exceptions to or waivers of any of the requirements for the Eagle Scout Award are permitted under this limited exception, and all requirements must be completed while the individual is a registered member of Scouts BSA, or after achieving the First-Class Rank in Scouts BSA (as specified in the BSA Guide to Advancement).

Since the BSA has determined that the minimum period of elapsed time to complete the requirements of the Eagle Scout rank is approximately 19-20 months, the extension is not available to any youth who is under 16 years of age on February 1, 2019 (as they will have adequate time to earn their Eagle before turning 18) nor to any youth who has already turned 18 years of age on February 1, 2019 (as they will be ineligible to join Scouts BSA).

1. Youth 16 years of age or older, but not yet 18, on February 1, 2019 who register as members of Scouts BSA on or before December 31, 2019, may request extensions to complete the Eagle Scout Award requirements after they turn 18 years of age.
2. Requests for extensions must be received no later than thirty (30) days after turning 18 years of age. Extensions must be in writing by submitting the designated form to the National Service Center and the form must be received no later than January 7, 2020. Only the National Council may grant extensions. The actual extension will be based upon the individual's registration date and age at the time of the request and will provide not more than twenty-four months from the date of initial registration to complete all requirements.
3. In the interest of fairness, these temporary transition rules apply to all youth joining Scouts BSA during 2019 – both girls and first-time joining boys.

Recognition

In keeping with established policy, the Eagle Scout rank is earned when the candidate's award has been approved by the National Council.

The BSA will not recognize a first female Eagle Scout to avoid potentially introducing incentives for leaders, troops or Scouts to prioritize expediency or engage in behavior counter to Scouting's values.

Instead, the BSA will officially recognize our Inaugural Class of Female Eagle Scouts in the fall of 2020, providing young women who join Scouts BSA the needed

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time to complete all requirements. This Inaugural Class will be celebrated nationally and collectively commemorated.

It is our hope and expectation that local units will ensure substantial individual recognition of their first female Eagle Scouts in a manner befitting their great accomplishments.

FAQ

- Q: Will this extension always be available for all youth that enter Scouts BSA?
No. These are temporary transition rules and will not be available to any youth who is under 16 years of age on February 1, 2019 as they will have adequate time to earn their Eagle before turning 18.
- Q: Can the first female Eagle Scout be identified based on the earliest Board of Review date?
No. The Eagle Scout rank is earned when it is approved by the National Council; that date will be noted to recognize this inaugural class.
- **Scouts BSA – completing requirements for Eagle Scout.** [from Implementation Details for Females Entering Scouts BSA prepared by BSA National]

FAQ

- Q: Is the BSA changing the Eagle Scout requirements for girls joining Scouts BSA in 2019?
No – the Eagle Scout rank requirements are not changing.
- Q: Can troops, districts or councils amend or adjust the requirements/process?
No. Eagle Scout requirements are set by the National Council and cannot be adjusted by a troop, district or council. In fact, the Eagle Scout rank is earned when it is approved by the National Council.
- Q: Will work completed while girls participated unofficially before the introduction of Scouts BSA count towards Eagle requirements?
No. To preserve the integrity of the Eagle Scout Award, all requirements must be completed while the individual is a registered member of Scouts BSA, or after achieving the First-Class Rank in Scouts BSA (as specified in the BSA Guide to Advancement, an individual after earning First Class Rank in Scouts BSA may transfer primary membership to Venturing or Sea Scouts and continue to work on Eagle Scout requirements).
- Q: Will work that female Venturers or Sea Scouts completed count toward Eagle Scout requirements?
To preserve the integrity of the Eagle Scout Award, all requirements must be completed while the individual is a registered member of Scouts BSA, or after achieving the First Class Rank in Scouts BSA (as specified in the BSA Advancement Guide, an individual after earning First Class Rank in Scouts BSA may transfer primary membership to Venturing or Sea Scouts and continue to work on Eagle Scout requirements).

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- Q: Will camping nights from current Venturing and Sea Scouts that count for requirements for the Order of the Arrow, also count for the Eagle Scout rank?
No.

➤ **Eagle Scout Proposal Approval – What is Expected?**

[Article from January-February 2019 Advancement News]

After a Life Scout chooses an idea for an Eagle Scout service project the next important step is to prepare a project proposal, and have it approved. Approvals are required from the unit leader, a unit committee representative, the project beneficiary, and a council or district representative. The criteria that individuals approving project proposals must consider for determining if the project is acceptable are specified in topic 9.0.2.7 of the Guide to Advancement.

Keep in mind that the proposal is an overview, but also the beginning of planning. It shows the approvers that the following five tests can be met.

1. The project provides sufficient opportunity to meet the requirement.

To meet this test there must be opportunity for planning and developing the project, for giving leadership to others, and determining the project will be "helpful" to the beneficiary. Planning and development require forethought from the candidate to organize a successful project effort rather than just following directions prepared by someone else. The leadership component is met by organizing and directing others who help carry out the project. Finally, by having a project that is "helpful," we show that we intend for the project to have a positive impact for the beneficiary, although that does not mean that the project must have lasting value.

2. The project appears to be feasible.

Is it a project the Scout is capable of planning and developing and also managing to a successful conclusion? Is it reasonable to believe that the Scout will be able to obtain the necessary resources (material, supplies, and people) to properly carry out the project? Note that the second test says, "appears to be feasible."

3. Safety issues will be addressed.

The Scout is aware of potential safety issues and hazards and will address them in the project plan. The safety issues do not need to be addressed or solved in the proposal. Assurance needs to be given that the Scout is aware of the issues and that those issues will be addressed in the project plan. Since an Eagle Scout project is a unit activity, unit adult leadership has the same responsibility to assure safety while conducting a project as with any other unit activity.

4. Action steps for further detailed planning are included.

Does the proposal include some action steps for preparing the project plan? Those steps don't need to be very detailed, but they should provide a simple "road map" that the Scout can follow when developing the project plan. These action steps are critical to the final test.

5. The Scout is on the right track with a reasonable chance for a positive experience.

Does the Scout's proposal demonstrate a good understanding of what is to be accomplished? Is it reasonable to believe that the proposed project has a good

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chance of providing the Scout a successful outcome that will contribute to personal growth and development? It doesn't have to guarantee success. The detail required for a proposal depends on the project's complexity. Details provided must be enough to provide a level of confidence for a council or district reviewer that the above five tests can be met, but not so much detail that—based on the possibility that a proposal can be rejected—it does not respect the time it takes to prepare the proposal.

For further information and insight see Guide to Advancement topics 9.0.2.3 - 9.0.2.5 and 9.0.2.14.

Merit Badges

- **Meeting MB requirements - meaning of terms.** Many of the requirements for the completion of a merit badge use the terms: "discuss", "describe", and "explain". However, the intended means (verbal and/or written) to complete requirements that use those terms is often misunderstood. The following is clarification of the intent for those terms from BSA's Advancement Team.

Discuss: *To investigate by reasoning or argument; to present in detail for examination or consideration; to talk about.*

The intent here is to verbally discuss.

Describe: *To represent or give an account of in words; to represent by a figure, model, or picture; to trace or traverse the outline.*

The intent here is to verbally describe.

Explain: *To make known; to make plain or understandable; to give the reason for or cause of; to show the logical development or relationships of.*

The intent here is to verbally explain.

Typically, a requirement will state 'discuss with your counselor'; 'explain in your own words'; or 'describe to other'.

If the intent was to put it in writing, we would have stated "discuss", "describe", or "explain"... "in writing".

Therefore, the intent is for verbal interaction with the counselor unless specifically stated "in writing".

- **Annual Re-registration of merit badge counselors**

It is a requirement that merit badge counselors re-register annually with the Council to continue as an approved counselor for previously approved merit badges. **The current registration expires on May 31, 2019.**

In order to facilitate the re-registration of counselors, the council's Registrar will send each current counselor a re-registration letter via regular mail and the counselor should receive it in early May. **The counselor must complete and return the re-registration letter to the council service center by June 1** to remain registered as a merit badge counselor for another year, in addition to

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meeting the prerequisites (current youth protection training and PA child protection clearances). Counselors are strongly encouraged to watch out for the letter and promptly complete and return it.

The failure to return the re-registration letter in a timely manner will result in a termination of the individual's registration to serve as a merit badge counselor. After the designated cut-off date, an individual must reapply for approval as a merit badge counselor through submission of a new application (utilizing the Merit Badge Counselor Information form).

➤ **Training for merit badge counselors.**

All merit badge counselors are strongly encouraged to take the on-line training "Merit Badge Counselor Position Specific Training". It is important that each counselor has a full and current understanding of their responsibilities and the recommended practices for quality counseling. A foundational aspect of the scouting program is having trained leaders.

If it has been more than two years since you have taken this training or never done the training, please complete the training. The training is available on

my.scouting.org under the "BSA Learn Center". The training includes the following:

- a) A module entitled "Merit Badge Counselor – Before the First Meeting". This module has five lessons with a quiz at the end of each. Each lesson is a stand-alone lesson and can be completed at different times (the individual does not have to do them all at the same sitting). It takes a total of about one hour to complete all five modules.
- b) A module entitled "Merit Badge Counselor – Position Trained". This module has one lesson with a quiz at the end. It takes a total of about 15 minutes to complete the module.

➤ **Preparation for merit badges at summer camp.** The awesome program at Resident summer camp begins at Camp K in about two months. **Participants are strongly encouraged to read the section on prerequisites to Be Prepared for the participation in the merit badge offerings.** Scouts and units are strongly encouraged to begin preparations now.

The 2019 Resident Camp Leader Guide provides important information on the merit badge offerings at summer camp starting on page 36 through page 39, including explanation of prerequisite requirements and "Be Prepared" requirements and the listing of those requirements for each merit badge offered at camp. The link to the Leader's Guide on the Council's website is [here](#).

Links

- Susquehanna Council's Advancement pages [{click here}](#).
- Guide to Advancement: <https://www.scouting.org/resources/guide-to-advancement/>
- Advancement News from the National Advancement Program Team, Previous issues are available at: <https://www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/advancement-and-awards/advancement-news/>
- Merit badge requirements: <https://www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/advancement-and-awards/merit-badges/>

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- Advancement and awards: <https://www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/advancement-and-awards/>
- Information for Life Scouts in the Susquehanna Council to help in attaining the rank of Eagle: <https://susquehannabsa.org/advancement/boy-scouts/information-and-resources-for-life-to-eagle-advancement/>