

Advancement News

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Previous issues are available at http://www.scouting.org/scoutsource/BoyScouts/AdvancementandAwards/advancement_news.aspx

Opportunities for Advancement Administrators

Conference on Education for Advancement Administrators

Florida Sea Base, January 11-17

The Conference on Education for Advancement Administrators, or CEAA for short, has established a well-deserved reputation for being a premier learning experience and workshop for council and district advancement-oriented volunteers and professionals. The CEAA will be held at the Florida Sea Base this winter, and there is still time to sign up. Here is a sample of what you will experience during your week in the sunny Florida Keys, January 11-17.



First, you will have an opportunity to assist the National Advancement Committee in the development of educational materials and other resources that will be used across the country. Many of the PowerPoint education tools posted at www.scouting.org/advancement are the result of previous CEAA conferences. This year's conference participants will view and discuss these existing materials and will be given the opportunity to make recommendations for additional tools to be developed for the future. Several members of the National Advancement Committee and its advisory panel will be on hand, along with representatives of the National Disabilities Awareness committee, to hear your ideas.

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Better yet, you will be able to “road test” some of tools that were begun at last year’s CEAA. Those in final development stages include “Effective Cub Scout Advancement,” “Conducting Effective Eagle Boards of Review,” and “Building and Sustaining High Performing Advancement Committees.”

CEAA Registration is available at:

<http://reservations.scouting.org/profile/form/index.cfm?PKformID=0x34182ffb>

This year’s conference will also provide participants an expanded list of interesting breakout opportunities dealing with topics such as Cub Scout issues, merit badge management, Eagle issues, increasing advancement, disabilities awareness, and advancement literature updates. Participants will have the opportunity to choose the areas of interest in which they want to spend some quality breakout time.

Wednesday will have an optional morning activity, but the afternoon will be time off for participants to relax and explore the Keys. In addition, a spouse program is being planned that includes snorkeling, kayaking, glass bottom boat tours, sunset cruises, and much more. Regrettably, there are no facilities or provisions for children at the Sea Base.

Do not miss your chance to visit the Florida Keys in January where you will have opportunity to engage in some amazing Scouting and advancement activities, and camaraderie.

On Increasing Advancement

Scout Advancement through First Class: Not Just a Matter of 1-2-3

Topic 4.2.0.1 in the *Guide to Advancement* states: “Requirements for Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class may be passed at any time after the joining requirements have been met.” This policy is reflected in *Boy Scout Requirements*: “The requirements for Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class ranks may be worked on simultaneously.”

The 11th and earlier editions of the *Boy Scout Handbook* reflected these references by advising the Scout: “You may pass any of the requirements for Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class at any time.” However, the current 12th Edition *Boy Scout Handbook* is silent on this point. In light of its affect on the growth of the boy into a First Class Scout, it is important for advancement-related volunteers at all levels to make certain we understand the pertinent content in *Guide to Advancement* and the *Boy Scout Requirements* book. And then, to make sure it is communicated to the Scouts we are here to serve. If we do not, the handbook alone may leave the impression that not only must the requirements-per-rank be completed in numerical order, but the ranks themselves as well.

It is equally important to guide patrol leader councils toward developing programs that support and encourage this multifaceted aspect of advancement. A troop can best support the learning of multiple skills that may fulfill requirements for all three foundational ranks, by presenting an active, exciting, and varied outdoor program. After teaching boys in a troop meeting how to tie a knot or to identify poisonous plants, a troop should reinforce the experiences by giving Scouts the opportunity to put their skill and knowledge to practical use. That is the value of the outdoor program. When a young man pitches his tent using a taut-line

Continued on page 3

hitch to secure it, makes a cool camp gadget using a clove hitch and lashing, or spots poison oak near the campsite, he can and should receive credit for fulfilling an appropriate requirement in any of the first three ranks.

Learning and using advancement-based knowledge and skills within the troop's outdoor activity structure, provides precisely the kind of experiential learning that inspired the Boy Scout movement more than 100 years ago. Facilitating ongoing, across-the-board successes for today's Scouts means that we are maximizing the Boy Scout program for the future.

Boy Scout Competition Announced

The Bill of Rights Institute is excited to announce its third annual Boy Scout competition, with the chance for Scouts to win up to \$1,000 plus \$500 for their BSA units!

The competition is structured around one short essay (800 words or fewer) related to the Constitution and the founding principles:

Abraham Lincoln described the Declaration of Independence as an 'apple of gold' and the Constitution as the 'frame of silver,' which encases it. For Lincoln, the Declaration asserts the moral and philosophical standard which the Constitution aims to implement.

In your analysis, to what extent does the Declaration of Independence assert a moral or philosophical vision for America? Explain the principles that constitute that vision. In your explanation, root each principle in a specific passage of the Declaration."

The Bill of Rights Institute is an educational non-profit organization with the mission to educate young people on the ideas of the Constitution and the rights it protects. The Institute develops curricula and provides professional development opportunities for educators. It also provides high school students with opportunities to develop their understanding of the founding documents through essay contests, Constitution clubs, online games, resources, and summer programs. For more information on the Bill of Rights Institute's programs, visit <http://billofrightsinstitute.org>.

Boy Scout Competition

Who: All currently registered or former Boy Scouts, ages of 14 through 19.

What: Answer one short essay question on the ideas of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence (maximum 800 words).

Deadline: February 10, 2015

Win: Grand Prize - \$1,000 for one Scout *and* \$500 for unit
Two Honorable Mentions - \$500 *and* \$250 for their units

Apply Online: <http://billofrightsinstitute.org/boyscouts>

Contact: lrripp@billofrightsinstitute.org

From the Guide To Advancement

Scoutmaster Conferences: Busting a Few Persistent Myths

In the March 2012 edition of *Advancement News*, we published and “busted” a few Scoutmaster Conference myths. We thought it about time to revisit and “re-bust” some that still persist.

Myth No. 1: *The Scoutmaster may deny a Scout a Scoutmaster’s Conference.*

Denying a Scoutmaster conference to prevent a Scout from advancing is not permitted. A Scoutmaster conference should not become just another requirement for rank advancement. It should be a rewarding opportunity for a unit leader to form a bond with each member, whether advancing or not. It is more about using the Scouting method of positive adult association than it is about using the method of advancement. Emphasizing the Scout Oath and Scout Law, setting goals, promoting additional responsibility, sharing ideas, and providing positive reinforcement should be reflected upon during every Scoutmaster conference. However, if an Eagle Scout candidate’s conference is denied or the unit leader refuses to sign a candidate’s Eagle application, the Scout has grounds for requesting a board of review under disputed circumstances (*Guide to Advancement*, topic 8.0.3.2).

Myth No. 2: *The Scoutmaster (unit leader) conference is the last step before a board of review.*

Topic 4.2.3.5 in the *Guide to Advancement* reads, “While it makes sense to hold [a Scoutmaster or unit leader conference] after other requirements for a rank are met, it is *not required* that it be the last step before the board of review.” A unit leader should plan conferences carefully. Trust is a vital element. Listening is another. Hearing about the Scout’s life outside troop activities is just as important as his experiences in the unit. Some leaders hold more than one conference along the way, and any of them can count toward the requirement. For example, some settings provide for more relaxed conversation, and a unit leader may find that conferences held during outings are less subject to interruption than those held during regular meetings—and provide a much better understanding of where the Scout is on his path to the next rank.

Myth No. 3: A Scout can “fail” a Scoutmaster conference and be held back from a board of review.

Requirements for each rank state, “Participate in a Scoutmaster conference.” This is not a pass/fail requirement. Topic 4.2.3.5 of the *GTA* clearly states, “[The conference] is not a ‘test.’ Requirements do not say he must ‘pass’ a conference.” When we examine the four steps to advancement, the unit leader conference is the first part of the “Scout Is Reviewed” step, not the last. The board of review is the second step. However, neither is to be a retest of skills.



The Cub Scout Angle

Webelos Scouts to Boy Scouts: When Should the Transition Start?



A boy's transition from a Cub Scout pack to a Boy Scout troop should begin on the day he first puts on his blue uniform and continue to the day he crosses over the bridge into a Scout troop. By the time Webelos Scouts in an Arrow of Light den are ready to crossover, they and their families should already have become familiar with Boy Scouting. They should be comfortable with the youth and adult leaders of the troop through visits, invitational campouts, den chiefs, and other pack-troop activities. They should be excited about beginning a new adventure. When correctly done, the transition should be almost seamless to the boy—a natural progression.

The key factor for improving Webelos to Boy Scouting transition has to be the ongoing working relationship between the leaders of a Cub Scout pack and those of one or more Boy Scout troops. This can often take the form of cooperative activities, many of which can be tied to the Webelos advancement program. Here are some solid ideas for fostering that relationship:

- Compare the calendars of the troop and pack to coordinate activities. Service projects, community events, and certain outings can all be done together; and the planning can help build relationships, even as it prevents conflicts in the use of equipment and facilities.
- Work with troop leaders to secure den chiefs for all dens, not just Webelos dens. Den chiefs can help with both member retention as well as building relationship between the units. Many den chiefs guide Webelos Scouts across the bridge into Boy Scouting and then continue to serve as troop guides for the new Scout patrols.
- Pack and troop leaders should cooperatively plan and conduct Webelos den-Boy Scout troop overnight activities. The troop can provide equipment, leadership, and logistics for the event. These campouts can show Webelos Scouts and their parents what to expect when they move into the troop, while also building relationships. Camping and cooking should be by patrol, clearly demonstrating the youth-led nature of Boy Scouting. Skills used should be tied to Webelos advancement, fulfilling requirements in Forester, Geologist, Naturalist, and Outdoorsman activity badges, for example. A number of other awards such as the Cub Scout Outdoor Activity Award, the World Conservation Award, the Conservation Good Turn Award, the Outdoor Ethics Awareness Award, and even the National Summertime Pack Award, are also good targets for overnight activities.

The November issue of *Advancement News* will cover additional useful suggestions to support a seamless Webelos-to-Boy Scout transition. Until then, start giving the ones in this issue a try.



Merit Badges:

Enhancing Our Youth's Competitive Edge

On the Horizon

Are you looking for new excitement for your troop meetings? Are your Scouts looking for a new merit badge adventure? Have you ever wondered about cryptography? The opportunity to explore more about **Signs, Signals, and Codes** is coming. Keep watching this section as anticipation mounts to see more details on this new merit badge scheduled for next year.

Do the boys in your district yearn for more information on **Animation**? Right now a group distinguished as the “who’s who” in the world of animation, digital media, game development, and film, is developing another exciting new merit badge opportunity. Some contributors are Eagle Scouts who create animated videos professionally. Early buzz is that when released, it will be available in both print and digital format.

In other news, nearly 20 merit badge pamphlets were recently released in digital “flip book” format through Amazon.com. We hope this is just the beginning of what is to come. It is possible that in the future, digital editions will be more robust and interactive than just pamphlets where the reader flips through pages.

Hear it First on Twitter

If you want the news first, follow the National Advancement Team on Twitter. Topics cover the FAQs received at the national office, clarifications on policies and procedures, news on changes and new releases, and best practices in advancement.

If you already have a Twitter account, follow us at ‘@AdvBSA’ or ‘BSA Advancement Team.’ If you do not have an account, it is time to take the plunge. It is a quick and easy process to set up an account at www.Twitter.com. To limit incoming emails (‘tweets’), you can select BSA National Advancement Team as the only account you want to follow.

Did You Receive these Tweets?

September 10: Take part in a survey on the next generation of Venturing uniforms:

blog.scoutingmagazine.org/2014/09/10/say-next-generation-venturing-uniforms/

September 10: Goal Setting-Time Management training for Venturing Discovery Award now available:

http://www.scouting.org/filestore/venturing/pdf/Goal_Setting_Time_Management.pdf

September 25: *Advancement News* is seeking stories about special impacts advancement experiences have had on youth. Send to advancement.team@scouting.org

September 28, 2014: New Handbook for Venturers, Venturing Advisor Guidebook, & Venturing Awards & Requirements book now available at <http://scoutstuff.org>

Eagle Issues

Boards of Review: Negative Reference Responses



Eagle Scout Requirement 2 reads: “*Demonstrate that you live by the principles of the Scout Oath and Scout Law in your daily life. List the names of individuals who know you personally and would be willing to provide a recommendation on your behalf.*” Therefore, the Eagle Scout Rank Application requires that a Scout list references. The *Guide to Advancement* requires that each of these references be contacted, but allows local councils leeway to determine the specific process for obtaining the recommendations, most often in a letter, to the board of review.

On occasion, a board of review may receive a letter from a reference that provides a negative view of the Scout. What are the members of the board to do with this? The answer is found in the *Guide to Advancement*. Topic 8.0.1.1 explains that one of the purposes of any board of review is to help assure that the requirements for the rank have been met. One of the requirements for every rank is to demonstrate that the Scout lives by the principles of the Scout Oath and Scout Law in his daily life. The members of the board of review should not delegate the determination of whether this requirement is satisfied to any single reference.

If any board of review, especially an Eagle Scout board, receives a negative letter, the members of the board should consider the content and context of the recommendation. Does the writer have an accurate understanding of the principles of the Scout Oath and Law? Did the reference impose additional requirements beyond those written for the rank? Does the reference have a bias against the Scout? How does the negative recommendation compare to the others received? After considering questions such as these, the members of the board may determine they do not have enough information to make an informed judgment. Follow-up, either by phone or a personal visit, may be in order. Or the board may want to consult with others who know the Scout in order to make an accurate determination of whether he lives by the principles of the Scout Oath and Law. That determination is the responsibility of the members of the board of review after considering all the information about the Scout.

Managing Subscriptions to *Advancement News*

Advancement News is designed for council and district advancement committees, advancement staff advisors, and Eagle processors. However, any Scouting volunteer or professional may subscribe.

Subscribing. Send a message to advancement.team@scouting.org, with “SUBSCRIBE” in the subject line. Indicate your name, email address, and council in the message text.

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The Venturing Perspective

The Summit Award: Venturing's Capstone Achievement



In the previous three issues of *Advancement News* we have discussed Venturing's new awards, beginning with the Venturing Award and progressing through the Discovery Award. Finally, Venturing crew members can earn the Summit Award, which is the capstone achievement.

As is the case with the Venturing, Discovery, and Pathfinder awards, when it comes to the Summit Award, what a Venturing crew does is not as important as how it does it. A crew's program should be built upon a program of continuous, youth-led adventure with focus areas in adventure, leadership, service, and personal growth. Each award level challenges Venturers to dig deeper into the question of who they are in order to truly develop and enhance their skills and confidence to complete the requirements.

While the Pathfinder Award requires a member to lead an adventure, the Summit Award moves a Venturer into the role of a servant leader. Servant leadership and community service are the cornerstones of the Summit Award. Candidates are challenged to design and lead a significant community service project, the requirements of which are available now in the new *Handbook for Venturers*, No. 33494.

Program Updates –2014 and Beyond

Stay on top of the latest changes to Cub Scouting, Boy Scouting, and Venturing by visiting www.scouting.org/scoutsource/programupdates.aspx

- Venturing award requirements and program overview
- Updated Venturing Frequently Asked Questions
- Updates from the National Annual Meeting
- Cub Scout youth handbook sampler
- Den leader meeting plans for youth handbook sampler adventures

Plus meet Ethan, the new Cub Scout guide.

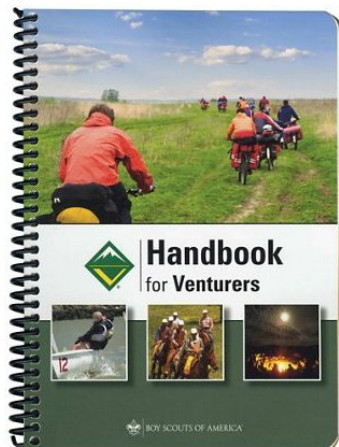
Specifics for Cub Scout Programs in the LDS Church

Transition information for all ranks, including a table providing guidance for Webelos badge transition, is available at www.scouting.org/programupdates by clicking on Transition Guidelines

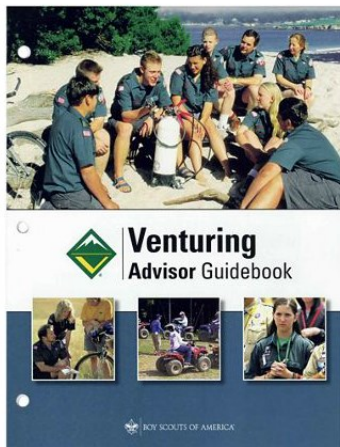


New Venturing Publications Released

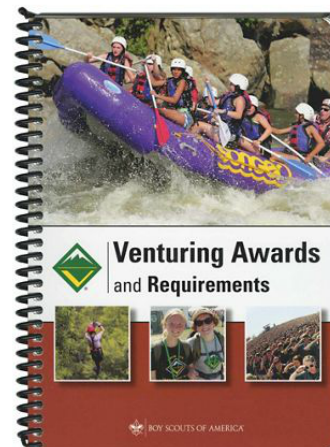
<http://www.scoutstuff.org>



No. 33494



No. 34655



No. 34784

From the Archives

Helpful Hints on Special Needs Advancement Flexibility (May 2012)

Section 10 of the *Guide to Advancement* contains an abundance of important information and can be very helpful for any leader of Scouts with special needs. In this issue of *Advancement News* we will focus on advancement flexibility.

For Scouts with special needs to get the most out of the program, a partnership must exist between the unit leaders, the parents, qualified medical professionals, and, as appropriate, the Scout's educational providers. Working together, all parties can gain an understanding not only of the disability and abilities involved, but also of the processes covered in the *Guide to Advancement*, which begin with topic 10.2.0.0.

First, everyone must realize that the ability to satisfy requirements is vastly different in Cub Scouting than in Boy Scouting. For Cub Scouts, the standard measurement is "Has he done his best?" For those working on Boy Scout advancement, the young man is "expected to meet the requirements—no more and no less—and he is to do exactly what is stated."

That quote from the *Guide to Advancement* should not make one think that advancement in Boy Scouting is not possible for those with special needs, but it does mean leaders need to do some planning to develop an understanding of how alternative requirements can be approved and used.

We want to ensure that every person who joins Scouting can participate in the advancement program. Section 10 is a great resource to help you find the answers that will make the program for special needs youth an enjoyable process for all involved.

Special Necessities

First Edition of *Abilities Digest* Published: Subscribe Now!

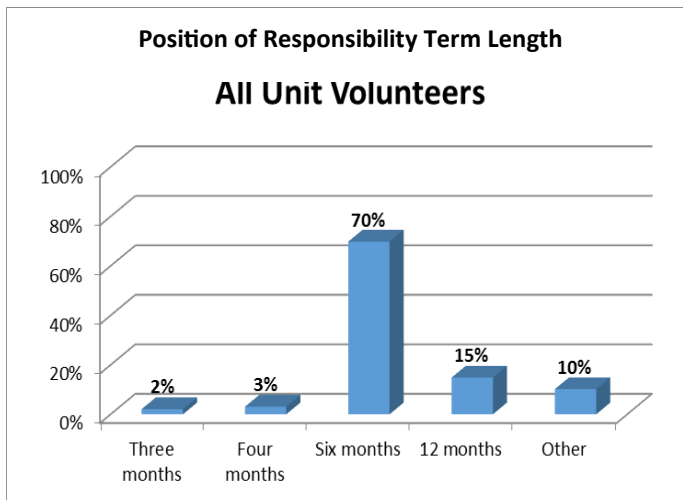
The National Disabilities Awareness Committee has published the first edition of *Abilities Digest* to spread the word about Scouting for youth who have disabilities. On a quarterly basis this newsletter will provide advice, program updates, resources for parents and leaders, success stories, training pointers, and from time to time, surveys to find best practices and to determine gaps in information its readers are seeking. Anyone wishing to subscribe to *Abilities Digest* should send a message to disabilities.awareness@scouting.org. Place "Subscribe" in the subject line, and include your name and council in the body of the message.

The Survey Says...

Positions of Responsibility Survey, March, 2014

OBSERVATIONS & COMMENTARY

In March, the National Advancement Team surveyed all Advancement News subscribers on the subject of Boy Scout positions of responsibility. Almost 1,300 readers responded.



In our last issue we reported how you responded about which positions should qualify as "PORs" for Star, Life, and Eagle ranks. The survey also asked about term lengths. Here is what you said on the issue.

Respondents overwhelmingly used six month terms for PORs in their units. As the graph shows, this was the standard for 70% of the units involved in the survey, while the next highest percentage of term lengths was 12 months. Only a combined 5% had shorter terms, while 10% used "other" options.

However, the survey's comments reflected that not all terms are implemented in the same way. For example, although the graph appears to show the overwhelming majority of POR terms were for six months, the most common "other" option was to elect the senior patrol leader for a one-year term while electing the other positions every six months. In some units the SPL, assistant SPL, and patrol leaders all served one-year terms, while the remaining positions were of shorter duration.

A few troops noted that their ASPL is elected for six months for "on the job training," and then moves into the SPL role for the following six months. Others noted that the length of POR service varied to coincide with time required for rank advancement or to align with school semesters. In a few cases it was based on how often the patrol leaders council decided to hold elections.

A Peek Ahead

Here is a glimpse of what we are working on for the next issue of *Advancement News*. As always, actual content may vary somewhat based on a number of considerations, especially to accommodate “late-breaking news” of immediate importance to our subscribers.

Topics Planned for November

Opportunities for Advancement Administrators: CEAA at Florida Sea Base

On Increasing Advancement: Parent Involvement in Advancement

The Cub Scout Angle: Webelos Scouts to Boy Scouts: When Should the Transition Start? (Part 2)

Advancement Committee Mechanics: Growing the Size of the District Advancement Committee

Merit Badges—Enhancing Our Youth’s Competitive Edge: Chess Merit Badge Popularity

Helpful Links

Here are some links to the most current materials of interest for Scouters who are involved in the administration of advancement. These and many more resources are available via the Advancement Resources page at www.scouting.org/Advancement.

[Eagle Scout Rank Application](#)

[Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook](#)

[Educational Presentations](#)

[Guide to Advancement](#)

[Merit Badge Counselor Information](#)

[Navigating the Eagle Scout Service Project; Information for Project Beneficiaries](#)

[On Increasing Advancement](#)

[On Increasing Advancement video link](#)

If any of these links are not working, please let us know at advancement.team@scouting.org.

About *Advancement News*

Follow the National Advancement Team on Twitter! BSA Advancement Team, @AdvBSA

Advancement News is the official e-letter of the Boy Scouts of America National Advancement Team and the National Advancement Committee. Its intent is to provide and clarify procedures found in the *Guide to Advancement*, announce various changes and updates in advancement, and to assist advancement committees in making decisions that can help increase the rate of advancement. Therefore, districts and councils may reprint articles from this publication. Our plan is to distribute eight or nine issues of *Advancement News* annually, but special editions may go out whenever there is important information to share. Feedback, suggestions, and letters to the editor are welcome at advancement.team@scouting.org.