

Advancement News

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2017

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Prepared. For Life.®

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

Opportunities for Advancement Administrators

Mechanics of Advancement Conference

June 18-24, 2017

Designed for unit, district, and council-level volunteers and professional Scouters, this course connects participants with the essentials of advancement and outlines the rationale behind many of the policies and procedures governing it. Presentations from members of the National Advancement Program Team will provide an understanding of how the BSA advancement method should be delivered. Group discussions will focus on effective ways to resolve the related issues and challenges that arise. The *Guide to Advancement* and the *Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook* are featured and covered in detail.



<http://www.summitbsa.org/programs/training/training-registration/>

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2017 Advancement Conferences

Excellent conferences are available during the summer months of 2017:

June 18-24: The Summit Bechtel Reserve – *Mechanics of Advancement*

A conference offering the opportunity to experience advancement education at the Summit, location of the 2017 National Scout Jamboree

July 16-22: Philmont Training Center – *Advancement Issues and Solutions Conference*

A conference designed to present opportunities for all Scouters involved in advancement to challenge their interpretations and knowledge of issues found in real units, districts, and councils.

July 23-29: Philmont Training Center – *Conference on Education for Advancement Administrators (CEAA)*

A conference which encourages all participants to help identify needs and design training for the future use of advancement Scouters.

Useful Advancement Courses Being Updated for Reissue in 2017

Two discontinued advancement education videocasts are being updated and converted into PowerPoint presentations for use as instructor-led advancement education courses.

- **The Merit Badge Program.** An introductory course intended for introducing new leaders, Scouts, and parents to the importance of and the procedures for completing merit badges.
- **The Eagle Scout Service Project.** A course to help Eagle Scout candidates, unit leaders, advancement administrators, and parents understand the concept and processes associated with beginning and completing a successful Eagle Scout Service Project.

Both of these presentations are expected to be published online by early 2017 at www.scouting.org/advancement.

About *Advancement News*

Follow the National Advancement Program Team on Twitter!

(BSA Advancement Team, @AdvBSA)

Advancement News is the official e-letter of the Boy Scouts of America National Advancement Program Team. 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 six 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

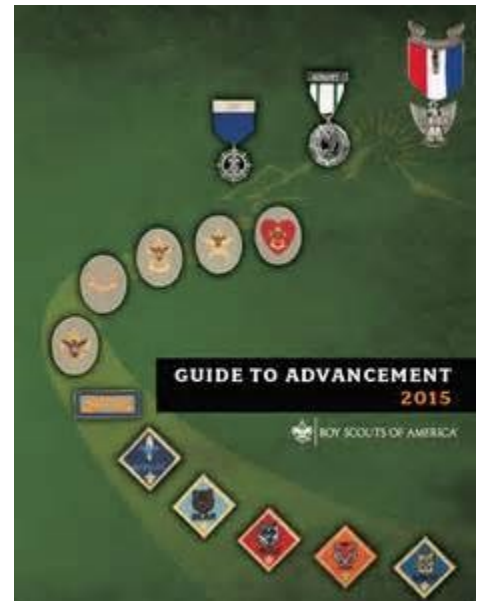
advancement.team@scouting.org.

From the Guide To Advancement

Guide To Advancement 2017 Coming Soon

The *Guide to Advancement* is always a work in progress, thanks to program changes that occur at all levels of Scouting. The National Advancement Program Team tries to keep everyone involved in advancement matters abreast of changes in policies and procedures through publications, e.g., *Advancement News*, and online postings at www.scouting.org/advancement or via Twitter by following @AdvBSA or “BSA Advancement Team.”

Nevertheless, every couple of years it becomes necessary to update and refine the single, basic publication that all advancement Scouters must look to for guidance: the *Guide to Advancement*. A revised version of *GTA 2015* (Publication 33088) is currently in final development. When *GTA 2017* is released, you can be certain that *Advancement News* will report on its major changes and additions and will bring you highlights of any new materials included, as well as those that have been expanded or changed.



Guide To Advancement Policy is Policy

Recently, the Troop Leader’s Guidebook, Volume II was released. Under the topic 'Alternative Merit Badges for the Eagle Scout Rank' on page 156 the following error was included:

“3. The candidate must complete as many of the requirements of the required merit badges as his ability permits.”

This is an incorrect statement, and will be corrected in the next reprint/revision.

Advancement Administrators and Scout leaders are advised to always refer to *the Guide to Advancement*. Topic 10.2.2.3 supersedes what is stated in the *Troop Leader Guidebook Vol. II*.

And states: “Though individual requirements for merit badges may *not* be modified or substituted, youth with special needs may request approval for alternative badges they *can* complete. This is allowable on the basis of one entire badge for another.” The section continues to explain qualifications needed for applying for the use of alternative merit badges for Eagle Scout Rank.

The correct policy is also stated in “The Application for Alternative Eagle Scout Rank Merit Badges”, No. 512-730

The Cub Scout Angle

Program Modifications Increase Advancement Flexibility



In June 2015, the Cub Scout program saw new and exciting changes that naturally had a correspondingly great effect of Cub Scout Advancement. The Cub Scout Adventures were intended to provide a new generation of Cub Scouts with the opportunity to experience the aims and values of Scouting.

A year after the new program was implemented, recommendations from the field have been implemented to make the program more flexible for Cub Scouts and their leaders. These modifications are designed to keep those Cub Scouts in the program and have them be successful in advancement. It is hoped that as leaders and parents embrace these changes the Cub Scout program will continue to provide quality experiences for Cub Scouts for many years to come.

The new program modifications may be found at www.scouting.org/filestore/cubscouts/pdf/CubScout_Advancement_Modifications.pdf. The modified adventures and their respective requirements may be used with the current handbooks; relevant changes to handbook content will take place in subsequent editions.

The updates explanation includes the overview that “Most modifications involve the number of requirements to be completed, reducing the mandate to a number achievable within the limited time available to many dens, while retaining rich program options that allow leaders to build strong programs adapted to local needs and situations. Some rewording fosters participation by boys who could not otherwise complete an adventure.”

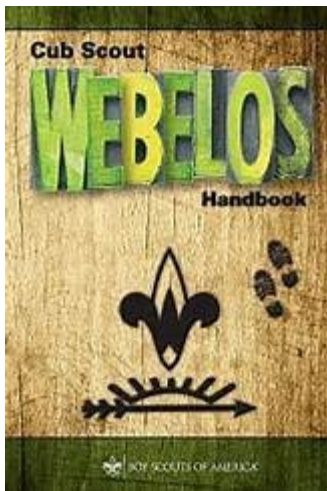
Leaders will find these changes provide more flexibility as they provide a program that supports advancement for all Cub Scouts. With the modifications, dens should be able to complete one adventure in approximately two den meetings. Similarly, adventures that previously required den or pack camping (unless the chartered unit does not allow camping) have been made more accommodating by giving options for either camping, day camp, resident camp, or an outdoor activity. Fewer required activities per adventure allow dens the opportunity to use the optional requirements to customize their program.

One particular change that both Cub Scout and Boy Scout leaders should be aware of is found in the Arrow of Light required adventure: Scouting Adventure. This adventure had previously aligned with the Scout rank, the initial Boy Scout rank. The Scout rank states that if the Scout completed the requirements as part of the Webelos Scouting Adventure, he must simply demonstrate his knowledge or skills to the Scoutmaster or other designated leader after joining the troop. Aside from some minor word changes, the newly adopted modifications have removed a requirement that is found in the Scout rank, and have also made a few of the requirements optional for completion of the Adventure, which are not optional in the Scout rank. Webelos leaders may want to make the extra effort to complete the optional requirements, and have the boys repeat from memory the Outdoor Code and explain what it means, to better prepare them when they cross over to Boy Scouts. New Boy Scouts can use this as an opportunity to make sure they fully complete those requirements that they did not do as Cub Scouts, which will

Continued on page 5

The following table shows comparison of Requirement 1 between the Boy Scout rank of Scout and the Cub Scout Arrow of Light Required “Scouting Adventure.”

Requirement 1 - Scout Rank	Requirement 1 - Scouting Adventure
<p>All requirements for Scout rank must be completed as a member of a troop. If you already completed these requirements as part of the Webelos Scouting Adventure, simply demonstrate your knowledge or skills to your Scoutmaster or other designated leader after joining the troop.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">Repeat from memory the Scout Oath, Scout Law, Scout motto, and Scout slogan. In your own words, explain their meaning.Explain what Scout spirit is. Describe some ways you have shown Scout spirit by practicing the Scout Oath, Scout Law, Scout motto, and Scout slogan.Demonstrate the Boy Scout sign, salute, and handshake. Explain when they should be used.Describe the First Class Scout badge and tell what each part stands for. Explain the significance of the First Class Scout badge.Repeat from memory the Outdoor Code. In your own words, explain what the Outdoor Code means to you.Repeat from memory the Pledge of Allegiance. In your own words, explain its meaning	<p>Prepare yourself to become a Boy Scout by completing at least a-c below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">Repeat from memory the Scout Oath, Scout Law, Scout motto, and Scout slogan. In your own words, explain their meanings to your den leader, parent, or guardian.Explain what Scout spirit is. Describe for your den leader, parent, or guardian some ways you have shown Scout spirit by conducting yourself according to the Scout Oath, Scout Law, Scout motto, and Scout slogan.Give the Boy Scout sign, salute, and handshake. Explain when to use each.Describe the First Class Scout badge, and tell what each part stands for. Explain the significance of the First Class Scout badge.Repeat from memory the Pledge of Allegiance., In your own words, explain its meaning. <p>Note that Scout Rank requires the Outdoor Code. Although it is not a requirement for Scouting Adventure for Webelos, it remains a requirement for “Outdoorsman” (formerly known as “Camper”). Thus, Webelos will have done all the requirements for the Scout Rank.</p>



With new modifications, Advancement leadership will want to note that the number of Adventures for Webelos and Arrow of Light have been significantly reduced. Webelos now needs 5 Required Adventures, and 1 Elective, and the Arrow of Light Rank is 4 Required Adventures and 1 Elective.

Advancement Excitement at National Scout Jamboree

Journalism Opportunity Awaits Jamboree Scout—Could They Be From Your District or Council?

Merit Badge Could Lead to Walking with National Geographic Fellow in Asia. Watch for additional information coming in the near future.

For Scouts attending the 2017 National Jamboree, working on exciting merit badges will add value and substance to their experience at the Summit! Specifically working on the Journalism Merit Badge will provide one Scout with the opportunity of a lifetime.

Through a partnership with the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting and National Geographic Fellow Paul Salopek, one Scout will be selected to join Salopek on his Out of Eden Walk. In Asia next year. In 2013, he embarked on a 21,000 mile walk to retrace the route of our earliest ancestor's migration from Ethiopia, across the Middle East, Asia, North America, and down to the tip of South America.

As a journalism project, the walk is an exercise in telling the big stories of our day--climate change, mass migrations, and other global issues--from the perspective of ordinary people who live along the walk route. His walk is also a clarion call to us back home in the US.

At a time when digital technology and global connectivity allow us to act, speak, and even to think more quickly and with less reflection than ever before, Salopek wants to slow readers down. When we walk, we can perceive a world of connections and meaning that is unobserved by those who speed by in cars or bury their noses in smartphones. He calls this practice "slow journalism," and urges us to follow his example.

Scouts will have the opportunity to record their experience in the Jamboree Passport to Adventure Journals, collect stamps for the programs areas visited, submit an online post, and write an essay about the experience that might be shared with a local newspaper.

Scouts who are interested in "Living Scouting's Adventure" with Paul on his Out of Eden Walk should register today for the Jamboree at www.bsajamboree.org and visit pulitzercenter.org/jamboree to learn more about eligibility requirements and key deadlines.



Registration information and more details on the 2017 National Scout Jamboree can be found

<http://www.summitbsa.org/events/jamboree/overview/>

Counselor's Corner

Counselor's Compass Now an Integral Part of Advancement News

As announced previously in the Advancement News, the new Counselor's Corner segment of the Advancement News will be replacing the former Counselor's Compass publication. Most of the information we will be sharing in this segment will be geared to merit badge counseling administration and related counseling "perils," and will, by design, be primarily aimed to assist the steady stream of new merit badge counselors, or MBCs. We want, however, to assure our veteran MBCs that we will not overlook your interests, and we will also be including items pertinent to your needs as new issues and items arise.)

Tips for Getting Up to Speed and a Checklist for Staying There

With any volunteer position in the Boy Scouts of America, understanding exactly what the role of that position is in the bigger picture and getting the proper training for the position is critical.

For the new merit badge counselor a good starting point is to review the *Guide for Merit Badge Counselors* available at: www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/512-065.pdf This resource introduces MBCs to the merit badge process, helps them gain an understanding of their unique role in advancement, and provides them with good instructional techniques for working with Scouts.

To find out about the availability of Merit Badge Counselor Orientation training in their area, new MBCs should check their local council's website or contact their local district or council training committee. This training is of value even to seasoned MBCs, as new counseling techniques and ideas are often times rolled out in these sessions. Here is an example.

New and veteran MBCs should first ask themselves a few simple questions:

- Am I using the latest merit badge pamphlet and requirements for badge instruction? (Visit www.scouting.org/meritbadges.aspx for current merit badge pamphlets and requirements.)
- Do I have the skills, education, and experience currently required to teach youth the subject matter of the merit badge? Furthermore, if required as for certain badges, do I have the specialty certification or training needed to teach the badge? (Find a list of the required specialty certifications in *Guide to Advancement* (topic 7.0.1.1), accessible at www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/33088.pdf.)
- Is my required Youth Protection Training (YPT) current? (If you are not sure, contact your local council service center to find out; or better yet, just log onto your My.Scouting account (<https://my.scouting.org/>) and take the convenient online YPT certification course.)

Archived editions of *Counselor's Compass* will remain available at

www.scouting.org/scoutsource/boyscouts/guideformeritbadgecounselors.aspx.

Eagle Issues



Written Statements of Religious Belief Cannot Be Required

Effective January 1, 2016, the statement “Tell how you have done your duty to God...” was incorporated into all Boy Scout rank requirements from Tenderfoot through Eagle Scout, including those for Eagle Palms. Each Scout is expected to “tell” how he has done his duty to God, but not to demonstrate, discuss, show, or prove it otherwise. He especially is not required to provide a written “Statement of Religious Belief” (or any other document with a similar title) in order to meet this requirement.

Nevertheless, some councils, districts, or even units are recommending—and some are requiring—that Scouts include such a statement with their Eagle Scout Rank Applications as a condition for meeting the religious reference portion of requirement #2. This is adding to the requirements and is contrary to the National policy to do so. All each Scout is required to do is to provide contact information for a religious reference. In cases where the Scout is not affiliated with an organized religion, he may use his parent(s)/guardian as his religious reference—it is up to them how they respond to the reference request. They cannot be required to submit a “Statement of Religious Belief” or any other written correspondence on behalf of their son any more than can any of the other references the Scout has provided.

To be clear on this point, councils, districts, and units must immediately stop even recommending that Scouts provide such statements of belief in order for their Eagle Scout rank applications to be processed. The argument that they are not “requiring” but only “recommending” such a statement be included is not valid. The fact that such a “recommendation” has come from someone in a position of authority infers that there is a formal expectation that such a statement be included, which is the same as requiring it. To avoid misunderstandings and Eagle Scout Rank Application processing delays, councils, districts, and units should eliminate any reference to such statements of belief, either from Scouts or parents.

An excellent discussion on this new requirement that explained how it was intended to be a monologue by the Scout and not a dialogue between a Scout and his leader was provided in the *Bryan on Scouting* blog in November 2015. The full article still can be found here and is well worth being revisited: <http://blog.scoutingmagazine.org/2015/11/02/beginning-next-year-boy-scouts-will-discuss-duty-to-god-at-each-rank/>.

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 March-April

- **On Increasing Advancement:** Advancement and preparing for Journey to Excellence Scores
- **Advancement excitement at National Scout Jamboree:** Opportunities for Scout Advancement abounds
- **The Cub Scout Angle:** Program Updates bring opportunities

From the Archives

Multiple Advancement Credit for One Activity (November 2012)

"The national Advancement Team [Ed: now the National Advancement Program Team] is often asked: 'What is the policy on using a single activity to fulfill more than a single Boy Scout requirement?'

"The answer involves three considerations. The first occurs when there is an exact match in the wording of the requirements. The second is when requirements give the appearance of aligning at first glance, but differ upon further examination. The third and most frequent consideration involves service to others.

"When requirements do match exactly—e.g., camping nights for Second Class and First Class ranks and merit badges—it is appropriate and completely permissible to use those matching activities for both the ranks and merit badges.

"However, in the vast majority of instances, seemingly similar requirements have nuances intended to create distinctly different experiences. The Communication and Citizenship in the Community merit badges provide an appropriate example. Each requires the Scout to attend a public meeting, but that is where the similarity ends. For the Communication merit badge, the Scout is asked to practice active listening skills during the meeting and 'present an objective report that includes all points of view that were expressed.' For Citizenship, the Scout is asked to examine differences in opinions expressed during the meeting, and then to choose and defend one side. After fulfilling the more inclusive Communication requirement, if the Scout selects an issue presented at the same public meeting and defends it, only then has he also met the Citizenship requirement.

"As for service to those in need, the BSA wisely does not have a set policy or rule. Rather, this outlook is left to the Scout's and his leaders' consciences. When contemplating whether to double-count service hours or a service project and apply the same work to pass a second advancement requirement, each Scout should ask himself: 'Do I want to get double credit for helping others this one time, or do I want to undertake a second effort and make a greater difference in the lives of even more people?' To reach his decision, each Scout should follow familiar guideposts found in words and phrases such as 'helpful,' 'kind,' 'Do a Good Turn Daily,' and 'help other people at all times.' As Scout leaders, we must ask ourselves an even more pointed question: 'Is my goal to produce Scouts who seek out loopholes or Scouts who will become the leaders in our communities?' To answer our own question, we should consult the same criteria that guides the Scouts."

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.

Unsubscribing. To decline future issues please reply and enter "REMOVE" in the subject line. We will remove the subscription within the next two weeks.

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Duplicate Copies. If you receive more than one copy of *Advancement News* at the same email address, please reply to all but one of them with "DUPLICATE" in the subject line.

Address Change. If you want *Advancement News* sent to a different address, reply and enter "ADDRESS CHANGE" in the subject line. In your message, enter your council name and the email address you prefer.



Hear It First on Twitter

If you want the news first, follow the National Advancement Program 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](https://twitter.com/AdvBSA) or "[BSA Advancement Team.](https://twitter.com/BSAAdvancementTeam)" If you don't have an account, it is a quick and easy process to set up an account at www.twitter.com. To limit incoming emails ('tweets'), you can select to have BSA National Advancement Team as the only account you want to follow.

Note: Advancement questions should be directed to advancement.team@scouting.org.

Did You Receive this Tweet?

October 18: Advancement will be an important part of the FSB Volunteer Development Conference. Join us Jan 16-21, 2017

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** web page at www.scouting.org/advancement.

[Merit Badge Group Instruction Guide](#)

[Advancement Educational Presentations:](#)

- Cub Scout Advancement: Delivering Adventure
- Getting the Most From Internet Advancement
- The Essentials of Merit Badge Counseling (English and Spanish)
- The Eagle Scout Service Project Coach (English and Spanish)
- Effective Troop Advancement (English and Spanish)
- Including Scouts With Disabilities
- Videocasts on *Guide to Advancement*, selected topics
 - ◊ Introduction to the Guide to Advancement
 - ◊ Judgment Calls
 - ◊ Boards of Review
 - ◊ Boards of Review Under Disputed Circumstances
 - ◊ Boards of Review Appeals
 - ◊ The Eagle Scout Application Process
 - ◊ Eagle Scout Boards of Review
- Videos
 - ◊ On Increasing Advancement
 - ◊ Why Advancement?
 - ◊ Guardian of the Gate



[Guide to Advancement 2015](#)

[Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook](#)

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

[Eagle Scout Service Project Coach Application](#)

[Eagle Scout Rank Application](#)

[Merit Badge Counselor Information](#)

[Reporting Merit Badge Concerns](#)

[Venturing Summit Award Service Project Workbook](#)

[Venturing Board of Review Guide](#)

[Individual Scout Achievement Plan](#)

[Lone Scout Friend and Counselor Guidebook](#)

