

**SCOUTS-L**

-----

**ADVANCEMENT  
& AWARDS**

**Date:** Fri, 5 Aug 1994 00:43:35 -0400 (EDT)  
**From:** "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@cap.gwu.edu>  
**Subject:** Re: Awards Chairman Woes

Susan,

In your posting to Anna you indicated that various Packs in your District have many differing advancement policies. Some apparently allow Scouts to work on Wolf until completed regardless of age, other allow a Bear to go back and finish Wolf, etc.

As a Cub Scout Trainer, I've seen a lot of new leaders with questions on extra time for ranks and going back to earn an earlier rank. Sometimes the rules get a little confusing and the implementation, predictably, is varied.

It may help, Anna, to note that there are a few areas where Packs are given discretion concerning ranks.

A Cub Scout may be allowed a few extra weeks to finish a rank when the school year ends before going on to the next rank (but not indefinitely). If a Cub Scout is repeating a grade, he generally is encouraged to move to the next age-group rank (Bear or Webelos). However, if it is in the best interest of the boy and he hasn't made much progress, he can be allowed to continue working on the same rank at the discretion of the Cubmaster and Pack Committee.

What the Pack does not have discretion to allow is for a Scout to go back and work on a previous age-group rank. A Scout "may not 'go back' and work on advancements designed for younger boys. A new Webelos Scout, however, must earn the Webelos badge before he can earn the Arrow of Light Award."  
Cub Scout Leader Manual at p. 130.

The rank achievement programs were designed to be age-appropriate. Allowing a Scout to go back and work on less challenging requirements for younger boys really doesn't help him grow or encourage him to do his best. While we are helping parents understand the advancement philosophy of Scouting, we might put in a word that the badges are the carrots to help

**motivate and reward, but not the end object. It may help to review with the parents the aims and goals of the Cub Scout program.**

**For what its worth, Chapter 11 of the Cub Scout Leader Book has some pretty good advice on advancement programs.**

**Yours in Scouting, Michael F. Bowman, a/k/a Professor Beaver**

**Date: Fri, 5 Aug 1994 14:49:06 -0400 (EDT)  
From: Susan Ganther <susan@gibbs.oit.unc.edu>  
Subject: Re: Awards Chairman Woes  
To: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@CAP.GWU.EDU>**

**On Fri, 5 Aug 1994, Michael F. Bowman wrote:**

**Mike, with all due respect, the reason I was pointing out the variances in policies among different Packs was to help the individual who was making accusations of cheating understand the need for a clearly stated written policy for their Pack.**

**What that policy should be should be decided by the members of that Pack's committee in conjunction with the Cubmaster, in the absence of any guidance from either the committee or Cubmaster other than appointing an advancement chair, the advancement chair might feel that it is their job to set policy and they would not be either a liar or a cheat for making that assumption.**

**When I posted the note I was much more concerned that they get some kind of policy than I was with what that policy might be. I was simply pointing out the broad specturm of policies I have seen, not referring to policies I use. BTW, The policy of letting kids go back after completing a rank to work on a previous one is one that was introduced by a Cub Scout Trainer at our Council Pow Wow.**

**YIS, Susan**

Date: Sat, 6 Aug 1994 13:16:31 -0400 (EDT)  
From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@cap.gwu.edu>  
Subject: Re: Awards Chairman Woes  
To: Susan Ganther <susan@gibbs.oit.unc.edu>

Susan,

We're after the same objective, e.g. getting packs to set a policy. I just thought there might be confusion about what the official position was and wanted to make sure they knew what areas were appropriate for a Pack to set a policy. I didn't mean to come across critically or to aggravate. If so, I apologize. I value your postings. I especially appreciated your reminder to folks not to jump the gun and be overly critical based on assumptions regarding the advancement issue.

We too have had misinformation from trainers at Pow Wow. It is easy to happen and hard to clear up the misconceptions later. We try to make sure that each trainer is well up-to-date on the subject and qualified, but even then there are always a few that pass on information that is less than accurate. Sometimes they just don't like to say they don't know when asked a question and give it their best shot -- dangerous. Sometimes they can't avoid giving their own experience or opinion. We had one trainer at Cub Scout Leader Basic Training advocating cake raffles. BSA Policy clearly prohibits any form of gambling including raffles as a fund raiser, Because he used them as a Cubmaster, he thought they must be okay. The next time the Trainer had gotten the word and advocated cake walks and auctions. And while cake raffles probably aren't really that bad, the trainer should have been more careful. I was that trainer and it was one of my first sessions. I guess what I'm trying to say is that we all try very hard to help make a lot a suggestions to make the program great for the Scouts and it is almost inevitable that a mistake or two will happen in passing information.

By the way, if you're ever in the Northern Virginia/D.C. area let me know, I'll give you a rundown on what Scouting events are going on. You'd be welcome at any in our District activities. If you're interested in Pow Wow Books, I can probably get you one of those too.

**Yours in Scouting, Michael F. Bowman, a/k/a Professor Beaver  
Deputy District Commissioner Exploring, GW Dist., NCAC, BSA  
Speaking only for myself, but with Scouting Spirit . . .**

**\_\_\_\_\_ mfbowman@CAP.GWU.EDU \_\_\_\_\_**

**Date: Thu, 11 Aug 1994 23:17:06 EDT**  
**From: BuddyVette@AOL.COM**  
**Subject: 1993 Advancements**

**Having seen an earlier note about the least-earned merit badge, I thought I might share with you some of the merit badge and advancement results from 1993.**

**There were 1,978,746 merit badges awarded, according to council records submitted to the National Office. The three most earned were First Aid, 94,528, Swimming, 93,488, and Camping, 73,831. The three least earned were Beekeeping, 777, Masonry, 796, and Consumer Buying, 806. These figures are not exact, as there were 21,569 merit badges on council records that did not have an identification. In 1992, there were about 500 unidentified merit badges shown on this report.**

**The advancement results were as follows:**

**Tenderfoot - 146,534**  
**Second Class - 117,717**  
**First Class - 103,463**  
**Star - 72,189**  
**Life - 56,041**  
**Eagle - 32,534.**

**Buddy Givens**

**Date: Sat, 3 Sep 1994 08:27:20 -0400 (EDT)**  
**From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@cap.gwu.edu>**  
**Subject: Re: Sports pins versus belt loops?**

**Bob,**

**The Sports Beltloop program was designed to encourage Cubs to get started with physical fitness activities. Hence, the beltloop requirements for almost all of the beltloops are to become familiar with the information in the beltloop booklet and to play the sport or game involved. Nothing really hard. The hope is that a Cub will try several sports and find one that he enjoys that will be a source of physical fitness development. The pins and letter are a reward for pursuing that development. The requirements for the pin letter vary by sport but usually amount to about 60 one-half hour sessions of practice, exercise, training or participation in the sport over a 90 day period. The Sports letter is earned by involving an adult partner in earning the pin. A Cub that plays on a soccer or softball team for a season easily qualifies for a pin. You should also be aware that any Cub that earns a beltloop also can wear the sports patch as a temporary patch. BSA has just published a new item entitled Cub Scout Sports and Academics Leader Guide No. 34295, which gives an excellent summary of both the sports and academic beltloop programs.**

**Yours in Scouting, Michael F. Bowman, a/k/a Professor Beaver  
Deputy District Commissioner Exploring, GW Dist., NCAC, BSA  
Speaking only for myself, but with Scouting Spirit . . .  
\_\_\_\_\_ mfbowman@CAP.GWU.EDU \_\_\_\_\_**

**Date:** Tue, 6 Sep 1994 23:02:35 -0400 (EDT)  
**From:** "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@cap.gwu.edu>  
**Subject:** Re: your mail  
**To:** merry b parmely <parmely@unm.edu>

Merry,

Best of luck. Every once in awhile we get a real bozo whose in it for reasons that are hard to fathom. Glad your DC & DE are looking at it.

Yours in Scouting, Michael F. Bowman, a/k/a Professor Beaver  
Deputy District Commissioner Exploring, GW Dist., NCAC, BSA  
Speaking only for myself, but with Scouting Spirit . . .  
\_\_\_\_\_ mfbowman@CAP.GWU.EDU \_\_\_\_\_



**Date: Sun, 25 Sep 1994 00:26:11 -0400 (EDT)**  
**From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@cap.gwu.edu>**  
**Subject: Re: "lost" scout**

**Jim,**

**You described a situation that probably is more common than we would like to see where a Scout has transferred to a Troop without much of a record of his past advancement.**

**There are three things I would suggest right away.**

- 1. Call the Committee Chairman of the other Troop personally and ask for the records, if you haven't already done so and ask. I ran into a situation once where the SM, ASM and Advancement Chairman just couldn't help, but the Chairman put her foot down and caused things to happen.**
- 2. Contact your District Advancements Chairman, he/she should have the pink sheets from previous advancement reports. If the Troop turned them in (and not all do a good job of this), then you can probably reconstruct. If this person doesn't have the records, check with the Counsel Office for the white sheets. If they understand the problem, they'll usually help.**
- 3. If the Scout attended a Camp, there may be an advancement report from the unit still on file with the camp's records. Some camps keep records of advancements for their own statistics.**

**I'd sure hate to put the Scout through his ranks all over again, if this is due to an adult screw-up. Is there anyone at the other Troop that can recall whether this Scout completed any advancements? Do they have his handbook? Which is a good question - what happened to his handbook? He should have kept it (but some troops have been known to take them for records keeping and forget to return them to the boys).**

**Yours in Scouting, Michael F. Bowman, a/k/a Professor Beaver  
Deputy District Commissioner Exploring, GW Dist., NCAC, BSA  
Speaking only for myself, but with Scouting Spirit . . .**

**\_\_\_\_\_ mfbowman@CAP.GWU.EDU \_\_\_\_\_**

**Date: Sat, 1 Oct 1994 02:19:38 -0400 (EDT)**  
**From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@cap.gwu.edu>**  
**Subject: Re: Scoutmaster Conferences**

**Buddy,**

**You described a situation where the SM deviated from his usual practice to ask a tough set of questions of candidates for First Class at the Scoutmaster Conference. Your description hints that some of the questions went beyond the BSA requirements to include his own. However, your description doesn't establish what questions were asked that are objectionable.**

**A Scoutmaster can and often does vary between general questions and concern with future plans for advancement to rigorous review of how the Scout completed requirements. It depends on the candidates and on the SM's knowledge of their progress. In a larger Troop more rigorous questions from time to time help pinpoint whether the advancement program is working and whether the boys need to go back and hone a skill a little more. Nothing wrong with that.**

**If on the other hand the SM has personal definitions of what it takes to become a First Class Scout that are in addition to the requirements stated by the current Boy Scouts requirements for the rank, then his conduct is inappropriate and the Committee should be reviewing his actions. He needs to be given guidance. He is not allowed to add requirements to a rank. The Scouts must complete the requirements as stated in the handbook, nothing less and nothing more. If he was adding requirements and refuses to take direction to approve their advancement, if they met the BSA requirements, he should be removed from his position by the Troop Committee.**

**Nothing could be more unfair than the imposition of surprise requirements to rank advancement. We don't want SM's designing their own requirements either. The program is designed to have some objective standards to give each Scout the same chance to advance. It almost sounds as though the SM has an agenda to prevent these two Scouts from advancing. If so, then the Committee should be acting.**

**Yours in Scouting, Michael F. Bowman, a/k/a Professor Beaver**

**Deputy District Commissioner Exploring, GW Dist., NCAC, BSA  
Speaking only for myself, but with Scouting Spirit . . .**

**\_\_\_\_\_ mfbowman@CAP.GWU.EDU \_\_\_\_\_**

**Date: Sat, 1 Oct 1994 02:36:02 -0400 (EDT)**  
**From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@cap.gwu.edu>**  
**Subject: Re: Leadership position**

**For Star and Life the Scout can use a Scoutmaster Assigned Leadership Position (SALP) to fulfill his leadership requirement. For example, the SM can assign a Scout responsibility for a Troop newsletter. The key thing is for the SM and the Scout to come to an understanding ahead of time on what leadership duties will exist and how they should be carried out.**

**Yours in Scouting, Michael F. Bowman, a/k/a Professor Beaver**  
**Deputy District Commissioner Exploring, GW Dist., NCAC, BSA**  
**Speaking only for myself, but with Scouting Spirit . . .**  
**\_\_\_\_\_ mfbowman@CAP.GWU.EDU \_\_\_\_\_**

**Date: Tue, 4 Oct 1994 01:59:47 -0400 (EDT)**  
**From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@cap.gwu.edu>**  
**Subject: Eagle Palms**

**Chuck,**

**The Scoutmaster has almost total discretion to decide what constitutes making a "satisfactory effort to develop and demonstrate leadership ability." The key thing though, is that we should be encouraging growth and not limiting opportunity to a specific pet project of the SM. I think that as long as a Scout has tried to improve his leadership abilities since becoming an Eagle and has tried to use his new skills, that should suffice. Rewarding positive effort is the purpose of recognition awards and here we should try to reward effort. If we keep rewarding effort, eventually the Scout will come to realize his efforts are important and most likely will then or later keep developing his skill. Similarly, if the Scout has made no effort, then he's not ready to wear the palm.**

**Yours in Scouting, Michael F. Bowman, a/k/a Professor Beaver  
Deputy District Commissioner Exploring, GW Dist., NCAC, BSA  
Speaking only for myself, but with Scouting Spirit . . .  
\_\_\_\_\_ mfbowman@CAP.GWU.EDU \_\_\_\_\_**

Date: Wed, 5 Oct 1994 7:44:12 -0600 (MDT)  
From: "ELL447::BRAMLET"@ECC7.ATENG.AZ.HONEYWELL.COM  
Subject: Eagle Palms

Michael:

Do you go by Michael or Mike?

You wrote...

"The Scoutmaster has almost total discretion to decide what constitutes "making a "satisfactory effort to develop and demonstrate leadership "ability." The key thing though, is that we should be encouraging growth "and not limiting opportunity to a specific pet project of the SM.

I don't disagree with you there, but if the SM expects something MORE that a standard leadership position, he really should communicate this to the boy BEFORE the boy fulfills the requirement as he interprets it. Per the SMH, the SMC can be help at any time, not just for rank advancement. It can also be held at the SM request, as well as the boy's.

"If we keep rewarding effort, eventually the Scout will come to realize his "efforts are important and most likely will then or later keep developing "his skill. Similarly, if the Scout has madeno effort, then he's not ready "to wear the palm.

This particular Scout had served in a non-SPL, ASPL position to qualify for Eagle. In our Troop, typically ASPL for the summer camp stint is more demanding than otherwise, at least for the week of camp. The Scout voluntarily took that position, at that time, to help out the Troop. We typically do not have enough boy leadership during that time, with all the merit badge work and other demands of camp.

YiS,

Chuck Bramlet  
ASM Troop 323  
Thunderbird District  
Grand Canyon Council

I didn't used to be anything! (Except younger) Maybe someday...  
E-mail any replies to:

**bramlet@ecc4.ateng.az.honeywell.com**

**Date: Wed, 5 Oct 1994 23:28:18 -0400 (EDT)**  
**From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@cap.gwu.edu>**  
**Subject: Re: Eagle Palms**  
**To: "ELL447::BRAMLET"@ECC7.ATENG.AZ.HONEYWELL.COM**

**Chuck,**

**I go by either name. But I come to the table quicker with Mike.**

**Your thoughts on this issue were appreciated. I agree with your line of reasoning and as it turns out will be using it in a local case where the SM will encouraged to have an SMC at his election to spell out his views before a Scout gets off track. Funny how things work out sometimes. Thanks.**

**Yours in Scouting, Michael F. Bowman, a/k/a Professor Beaver  
Deputy District Commissioner Exploring, GW Dist., NCAC, BSA  
Speaking only for myself, but with Scouting Spirit . . .  
\_\_\_\_\_mfbowman@CAP.GWU.EDU\_\_\_\_\_**



Date: Sat, 8 Oct 1994 18:38:01 -0400 (EDT)  
From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@cap.gwu.edu>  
Subject: Re: Webelos-Wolf

Kipp,

Your posting described a Webelos trying to finish a Wolf badge, he started in his Bear year. Whewee. I guess some folks just don't read. Shame on his other Pack. Now that you have the inherited problem, I guess that won't do much good though.

I don't think giving him a Wolf Badge is the answer. For starters he's going to have to explain why he's got a Wolf and Webelos with no Bear to every kid who asks and most will. Then he's likely to get razzed big time about having the Wolf. The Scouts know the rules and it'll be hard to get around that.

Fortunately, many of the Bear requirements mirror those of Wolf only are a bit harder. There is also a provision for extending the time to complete when there are extenuating circumstances (usually illness, disability, etc) and perhaps your DE could consider this to be the case here. I think the Scout would be better served by explaining that he should have been working on Bear and that most of his work can be converted with a little extra effort (remember that the requirements are age specific and many repeat each year)\* and that what's not the same, he'll have a set amount of time to finish. Then when it comes time to present the award, it can be said that it was from his work in his previous Pack that has just now been brought up to date. The other Scouts need not be aware of any more than that. I'd sure hate to see the kid hurt because his previous leaders had no idea about the program. On the other hand, we need to be careful not to create a situation where other Scouts feel he has been given a special advantage (e.g. new Webelos that can't go back to do Bear).

\* Consider the similarity between requirements and what extra work needs to be done:

Wolf	Bear
------	------

1 Feats of Skill	23 Sports
------------------	-----------

2 Your Flag                      3 What makes America Special  
3 Keep Body Healthy 16 Building Muscles  
4 Home & Community              7 Law Enforcement  
5 Tools                      20 Sawdust and Nails  
6 Collection  
7 Living World                      5 World & Wildlife, 6 Take Care of Your Planet  
8 Cooking and Eating 9 What's Cooking  
9 Be Safe at Home and 14 Ride Right  
10 Family Fun                      10 Family Fun  
11 Duty to God                      1 Ways We Worship  
12 Making Choices

The above is just a quick list and not necessarily all inclusive. Some requirements have natural components in the next rank where a little more work would make things possible. Hope this helps.

Yours in Scouting, Michael F. Bowman, a/k/a Professor Beaver  
Deputy District Commissioner Exploring, GW Dist., NCAC, BSA  
Speaking only for myself, but with Scouting Spirit . . .  
\_\_\_\_\_ mfbowman@CAP.GWU.EDU \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** Wed, 26 Oct 1994 16:58:16 -0700  
**From:** Keith Sutton <ksutton@U.WASHINGTON.EDU>  
**Subject:** Cub Scout Sports Belt Loops & Pins

The "1994 Spotlight on New and Updated Cub Scout Program Elements" put out by National BSA as a C.S.Leader Training Supplement clarified the usage of the Sports program, Belt Loops and Pins on pages 21-22:

"Pack leadership determines how Sports...are implemented in their dens and pack. Pack leaders define what level of participation is appropriate, how dens can be involved, what constitutes a den or pack tournament, when and how recognition takes place, how costs of the program are budgeted, and how requirements are verified...Flexibility in some cases might be warranted..."

"\*Belt loops\* can be earned when (1) a Cub Scout learns the rules & basic background info... about a sport...,and (2) he actively participates, doing his best, in an organized sport...experience. Belt loops do not usually require a lengthy time commitment, & can be earned in the home, in a den or pack activity, or outside the unit in the school or community..."

"\*Metal pins\* can be earned after a belt loop has been received. Pins indicate that more time, effort, & competency has been demonstrated. In all of the sport activities (except BB shooting), a total of 60 points within a 90-day period meets the requirements for the pin. One point is counted for each 30 minutes of participation..."

"\*Embroidered letters\* are available for boys who have earned pins. Sports letters are awarded to a boy when he and his adult partner have each earned at least one Sports pin..."

"\*Participation patches\* can be given to Cub Scouts as a recognition of participation in the program....These patches are considered temporary..."

"\*Trophies\* may be used as any appropriate recognition determined by pack leadership..."

"...Boys should be awarded Sports...pins and/or belt loops only one time in each category unless they are Webelos Scouts, who may need to earn pins or

**belt loops again to meet requirements for an activity badge.**

**"...Flexibility is important in the program, however, the BSA strongly encourages the use of proper equipment and standards to maintain safety in all activities."**

**The (...) deletes info about the Academic program which most of the same applies except the pin info in some cases. I quoted this in length because it clears up an area that always has been misunderstood by several unit leaders in my council and district and concisely spells it out.**

**Keith Sutton from Chief Seattle Council ...used to be an Antelope  
ksutton@u.washington.edu**

**Date:** Thu, 1 Dec 1994 00:05:55 -0500 (EST)  
**From:** "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@cap.gwu.edu>  
**Subject:** Re: First Year Program

**Bill,**

**You may want to consider how you are evaluating the success of your Troop.**

**I would suggest that while advancements can give you some feeling about how well you are doing, its not the end all. A better way of looking at would be to ask whether your Troop is meeting the goals of Scouting in a broad sense. If the Scouts are having fun learning, growing, learning leadership skills, learning how to give service, becoming more responsible, and showing integration of the Scout Oath and Law in their behavior, for example, then you are probably accomplishing the goals of Scouting. Sometime we tend to fall into the trap of wanting to see advancement as a measure of success. It only measures part of what the Scouts are doing. The greater part, as in life, is often the part that is outside of formal programs.**

**All of that aside, most Troops with good retention, high energy, a lot of fun, and good advancement are usually boy-run using the patrol method. Its easy for an adult to impose structure, but in the end its not all that successful. Although its more difficult, giving the PLC and its boy leaders responsibility is much more productive. They know what is fun almost instinctively and with a little help here and there usually are able to come up with a pretty good year long program in a PLC planning/strategy meeting. Most of the time they'll also be able to work-in sufficient Scoutcraft and advancement opportunities for Scouts to get through the ranks. However, realize that each Scout is going to progress at his own speed (sometimes agonizingly slow). If the boys plan and carry out a program, chances are the new fellows will stay and eventually work through the ranks.**

**Speaking only for myself in the Scouting Spirit, Michael F Bowman  
Used to be a Beaver, National Capital Area Council, B.S.A.  
mfbowman@CAP.GWU.EDU (mfbowman@CAPACCESS.ORG after 12/13/94)**

**Date: Thu, 8 Dec 1994 00:47:55 -0500 (EST)**  
**From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@cap.gwu.edu>**  
**Subject: Re: Academic Requirements for Jr. Leaders**

The Senior Patrol Leader (SPL) with failing grades may have found his only refuge in Scouting. The grades may indicate any one of a number of problems at home, school or personal. In most places, we shouldn't even have access to that information. But assuming the Scout has made it known

or his parent(s), I'd counsel encouragement of what the Scout is excelling at, which apparently is leadership in the eyes of his fellows. Perhaps a word or two is needed with him and/or his parents to see how things are going - that may explain a lot. It may be possible that by encouragement here, other areas will show improvement too. Sometimes grades reflect as much the student's self-concept as academic performance (I don't know about this case). I can recall an SPL who was bored in school, had been labelled by the School as "dumb" and whose grades only picked up when the

lad's self-worth increased in his own eyes as he took charge of the Troop. His guidance counselor had even told him he should find a vocational school, that college was a definite NO. Wrong. That SPL went on to earn a Bachelors, Masters and Doctors and even taught at a college for a while.

Speaking only for myself in the Scouting Spirit, Michael F Bowman

Used to be a Beaver, National Capital Area Council, B.S.A.

mfbowman@CAP.GWU.EDU (mfbowman@CAPACCESS.ORG after 12/13/94)

**Date: Sat, 27 May 1995 22:23:37 -0400 (EDT)**  
**From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@capaccess.org>**  
**Subject: Re: Push for Eagle by 14**

**I have to agree with Bob Condon. Pushing advancement is not what Scouting is about. Scouting is about growth and every boy grows at a different pace with different objectives. Our role is to give them an environment with opportunity and fun where that growth can take place. Advancement acts as away to foster recognition which then motivates. Advancement for its own sake is about as much fun as working in a factory without getting paid. It seems that all to often some parents will lose sight of what we are trying to do - encourage character development, citizenship training and personal fitness. These three are the bottom line. The method is fun and activity with ample opportunity to excel. With these in place, advancement follows and can be used to reward and encourage - no more and no less. The Troop needs to get back on track with a fun activity filled program that will attract interest. Sell the fun - reward the progress - enjoy the results.**

**Speaking only for myself in the Scouting Spirit, Michael F. Bowman  
Prof. Beaver, Nat. Capital Area Council, BSA mfbowman@CAPACCESS.ORG**

**Date: Tue, 6 Jun 1995 22:52:21 -0400 (EDT)**  
**From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@capaccess.org>**  
**Subject: Re: Score Req. for BB-Gun Sport Pin?**

**To quote from Scouting Magazine:**

**"The belt loop and pin for BB guns were designed to be recognitions for Cub Scouts and Webelos Scouts to earn at a council day camp or resident camp under the supervision of a qualified shooting sports range officer. The recognition can only be awarded with the approval of the camp BB gun shooting sports director.**

**"The belt loop is earned by any second-through fifth-grade Cub Scout or Webelos Scout who, while at camp, completes a basic BB gun marksmanship safety course, fires 15 shots at 4- or 5-inch target (no particular score required) and is able to adjust the BB gun sight.**

**"The pin is earned by completing the camp BB gun safety program and earning at least 60 credits in firing activities with a parent or adult partner. Credits are based on training and shooting ability rather than on time so, if a boy is proficient, he can earn it at camp. If possible, councils may provide extra opportunities to continue qualifying for the pin after camp is over. However, just as at camp, a parent or adult partner and a certified range officer must be present for the shooting credits to be valid.**

**"A letter may be earned when a Scout earns the loop in camp and when the Scout and his adult partner earn pins.**

**"As is the case with all Cub Scout sports and academic programs, the intent is to expose the Scout to a new skill and recognize him for practicing that skill. This sport is different because we are trying to teach Cub Scouts to respect and safely handle a firearm in a controlled camp environment under qualified trained leadership."**

**Speaking only for myself in the Scouting Spirit, Michael F. Bowman  
Prof. Beaver, Nat. Capital Area Council, BSA mfbowman@CAPACCESS.ORG**



**From mfbowman Tue Jun 6 23:13:50 1995**  
**Date: Tue, 6 Jun 1995 22:59:38 -0400 (EDT)**  
**From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@capaccess.org>**  
**Subject: Re: Boys quitting after Eagle**

**Bob,**

**Almost everyone of us that has been a Scoutmaster has or is going to run into a situation where a Scout wants to quit after getting Eagle. The first thing that I would suggest is that we should still encourage the young man to complete his Eagle. Remember that we are there to help develop character, further citizenship training and encourage personal fitness. If he fulfills the requirements, we are furthering the goals of Scouting. It may be that he quits for now because of the lures of other activities, but it doesn't mean that he has lost the lessons or that they won't serve to motivate him in the future. I know many Eagles who left their Troops shortly after getting the award, who later came back to serve as Scoutmasters themselves or who have given heartily of their time and talents in community service.**

**The second thought I have is that, if we were to impose an extra requirement for immediate repayment in service we would only encourage resentment and maybe have that Scout quit for good, never to return and never to give future service.**

**I'm glad that so many Eagles stay and turn right around to give leadership and service as is the case in your Troop. We certainly want to encourage this. But for some Scouts this is not going to be the case. Think of it as a long term investment with payoffs/dividends to come in the future. And for now be thankful that he was motivated to complete what he started instead of quitting already. While he's still involved, he's still learning and that's good. And in the time that remains until he gets his award, he may change his mind.**

**I guess this is where we must remember that we too pledge the Scout Law - a Scout is Kind. In my mind part of kindness is understanding. To that end I would encourage a kind approach making the most of the opportunity still there with the hope that he will later polish the Eagle with service as he matures.**

**Speaking only for myself in the Scouting Spirit, Michael F. Bowman  
Prof. Beaver, Nat. Capital Area Council, BSA mfbowman@CAPACCESS.ORG**

**Date: Sun, 16 Jul 1995 01:08:36 -0400 (EDT)  
From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@CapAccess.org>  
Subject: Re: Merit Badge Work**

**Robert,**

**In your posting you listed some of your Troop's rules regarding merit badges. After looking at them, I think there are some points you may want to consider:**

**R2. All Merit Badge Counselors shall be approved by the Troop Committee.**

**Your Troop Committee does not have authority to approve all merit badge counselors. Each Council and District have merit badge counselors available to all Scouts and approval for them has already been made at the Council level. And all Scouts can use these counselors. Your Troop committee can help the COR to review membership applications for people registering as Counselors via your Troop only.**

**R3. Merit badges shall only be signed off by the troop-assigned merit badge counselor or the designated alternate.**

**Again this is beyond the authority of your Troop. Merit badges can be signed off by any registered Merit Badge counselor in any Council regardless of whether your Troop "assists" them or not. The Troop should be recruiting merit badge counselors and using them, but there are going to be a number of merit badges where you will need outside counselors because of their expertise, when you don't have people really qualified among the Troop's counselors. This is also true for Summer camps, camporees and other Scouting events with merit badge midways.**

**R4. The Scoutmaster or his/her designated alternate, shall be the only person authorized to sign off for rank and special awards.**

**I would drop the "and special awards" from this. For example, at Camp a Scout may complete the Hornaday Award and have it signed by the Camp's Ecology Director.**

**R5. No parent shall sign off their own child on any merit badge, advancement or special award, unless the requirements specifically require a parental signature.**

**This is not a BSA rule or policy. Many Troops feel strongly because of the perception that either the parent will just sign off with no real work or the opposite - will make the Scout do twice the required work. This is understandable and not a bad idea, but a hard and fast rule can come back to haunt you. What happens when you have a Life Scout one required MB from Eagle and his parent is the only parent who will volunteer to act as counselor for that MB? By accident of birth the Scout is disqualified from being an Eagle? I hope not.**

**Speaking only for myself in the Scouting Spirit, Michael F. Bowman  
DDC-Training, GW Dist. Nat Capital Area Council  
mfbowman@CAPACCESS.ORG**

**Date: Sun, 16 Jul 1995 01:16:00 -0400 (EDT)  
From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@CapAccess.org>  
To: SCOUTS-L Youth Groups Discussion List <SCOUTS-L@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU>  
Subject: Re: When to give the Badge Out...**

**Rob,**

**I think you have good instincts in seeing the advantages of recognizing achievement as soon as possible. Most Troops have Courts of Honor only two to four times a year and that can be a long time. Its pretty hard on a Scout that has made his way through both 2d Class and 1st Class since the last Court of Honor to have to go to camp and still wear the Tenderfoot badge and be treated as such.**

**As soon as the Troop turns in an advancement report to the Council that Scout is recognized by BSA as having completed his rank requirements (for all ranks except Eagle). At that point he or his parents would have the right to buy the patch for him anyway. I'd say cut-to-the-chase and present him the patch at a Troop meeting line-up. The formal ceremony can still be important and is a great time to present him with his card, pin, certificate (they are available at Scout Shops), etc. and to give the parent's pin(s).**

**I don't think the Court of Honor is diminished in the slightest by the fact that the Scout already has the patch proudly displayed on his uniform as well he ought. After all we are trying to use this as a carrot to get him to keep on climbing the trail to Eagle. Bottomline: do it for the Scouts.**

**Speaking only for myself in the Scouting Spirit, Michael F. Bowman  
DDC-Training, GW Dist. Nat Capital Area Council  
mfbowman@CAPACCESS.ORG**

**Date: Mon, 31 Jul 1995 01:16:53 -0400 (EDT)  
From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@CapAccess.org>  
To: SCOUTS-L Youth Groups Discussion List <SCOUTS-L@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU>  
cc: Multiple recipients of list SCOUTS-L <SCOUTS-L@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU>  
Subject: Re: Flexibility of requirements**

**Robin,**

**Your example suggests three things that should be of concern to all Cub Scout Leaders:**

**1. Are we giving the Scout the best program?**

**Shortcuts can always be appealing and someone can always think of a justification that sounds good at the time. But what of the Scout? Don't we owe it to him to give the best possible program? How hard would it be to get a few softballs, etc. to do it right? He's going to remember that Scouting meant half-way measures for a long time, if this is how activities are conducted and adjust his view of what he should do accordingly.**

**2. Are we teaching by examples a set of values contrary to good citizenship?**

**Very few Cubs are unaware of what the requirements state. They know when somebody is cutting corners. Are we teaching them that the rules do not matter? That it is okay to be expediant for whatever motivation? When a leader decides to ignore rules, requirements, etc., the boys' radar is on and they are aware of it right away and because in their minds this is**

unusual, it makes more of an impression. Do we want to teach them respect for rules as part of citizenship values? Of course we want them to understand and respect rules and as they grow older how to change them.

### 3. Are we damaging future leadership, by cutting parents out?

For Wolf and Bear ranks the parents should be the ones to decide whether a Cub has passed a requirement as much as possible. We want the parents involved and to become familiar with the program. This tends to help the Pack recruit Den leaders and Pack leaders later on. If the parent is allowed to be passively non-involved, it makes recruiting much harder. When a day-camp staff supplants the parent, this can have lasting and probably unintended effects. Maybe the message should be that Day-camps should focus on fun activities for their own sake instead of trying to act as rank factories. There are hundreds of activities that can be done at a Day-camp without worrying about ranks, all of which can be fun and teach skills that make earning rank later much easier. Planners should always remember a key Cub Scouting principle - KISMIF (Keep It Simple, Make It Fun). If the Cubs have fun they will want to keep participating and be all the more motivated. And at home this enthusiasm won't be lost on parents.

Speaking only for myself in the Scouting Spirit, Michael F. Bowman  
DDC-Training, GW Dist. Nat Capital Area Council  
mfbowman@CAPACCESS.ORG

From mfbowman@CapAccess.org Mon Sep 4 23:28:37 1995  
To: SCOUTS-L Youth Groups Discussion List <SCOUTS-L@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU>  
Subject: Re: Scout Spirit

Though the requirements for Showing Scout Spirit have changed in wording, this does not imply any change in the review process. There should still be a discussion of this in the Scoutmaster Conference. And as in past discussions, let me remphasize that the function of the Board of Review is not to retest requirements.

The broader language is something that a lot of Scouters wanted in my

experience and in practice used anyway. This recognition of the importance of Scout Spirit in life is an valuable opportunity for the SM to discuss with the Scout how he is applying Scout Spirit in his everyday life and working with him to understand that it goes beyond the meeting hall.

How to review this? Same as before. Ask the Scout how he has shown Scout Spirit, only this time expand the question(s). As before we are in the process of character development and this is a great place to work on things. This does not mean that we should be generating new hurdles or standards. And when in doubt, TRUST the Scout - even if you are not sure it is appropriate. The fact of your trust will have a positive effect and may be enough on its own for the Scout to do better.

No doubt there are many leaders who have found that in giving positive expectations, these expectations have been self-fulfilling.

Speaking only for myself in the Scouting Spirit, Michael F. Bowman  
DDC-Training, GW Dist. Nat Capital Area Council  
mfbowman@CAPACCESS.ORG

From mfbowman@CapAccess.org Fri Sep 29 04:23:53 1995  
To: SCOUTS-L Youth Groups Discussion List <SCOUTS-L@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU>  
Subject: Re: Parents signing off on requirements

Rob,

You are right that there is nothing in the advancement rules that prohibits a parent from signing for a son's rank or merit badge work, if that parent is a registered leader/mb counselor. In fact, the Advancement Policies and Procedures Guide specifically allows this.

Why not prohibit parents signing off for a child? In many areas with sparse population such a rule would work a real hardship. In denser areas of population the rule still applies and we can't alter it. However, if the unit is in area where there are other people available, we can nudge and encourage the Scout and his parents to take advantage of the additional resources. For most of the Scouts this is not a real problem, they can't wait to get away and see what other people think, do, etc. They do a lot better without home pressure in many instances in an environment without

a lot of emotional baggage. For the parents you can explain that this is part of the growth process we are trying to encourage - learning to use community resources to become a more productive citizen. And you can always tell a parent that you do this to make sure every Scout has the same level of challenge. Some won't bite, but most will.

Speaking only for myself in the Scouting Spirit, Michael F. Bowman  
DDC-Training, GW Dist. Nat Capital Area Council  
mfbowman@CAPACCESS.ORG

Date: Fri, 27 Oct 1995 01:33:26 -0400 (EDT)  
From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@CapAccess.org>  
Subject: Re: Cub Scout Advancement Questions

Mike Walton,

In your eagerness to be helpful I think you may have erred in advising that a Bear Cub Scout could use electives from the Wolf Book. The Bear Book in explaining the electives for arrow points talks only about working on achievements not used for Bear and electives in the Bear Book. Similarly, the language in the Cub Scout Leader Manual seems to be clear that each works out of the appropriate book. I do not see anything that permits a Cub to regress to working on Wolf electives as a Bear and this would be inconsistent with the idea that Cubs can't go back to work on earlier requirements because the requirements are age group skill based. My reading of the literature is that a Bear may only work on material in the Bear book.

Speaking only for myself in the Scouting Spirit, Michael F. Bowman  
DDC-Training, GW Dist. Nat Capital Area Council  
mfbowman@CAPACCESS.ORG

Date: Tue, 31 Oct 1995 12:35:41 -0500  
From: Jerry Gray <Jerrygray@aol.com>  
Subject: Re: Cub Scout Advancement

In a message dated 95-10-31 11:43:32 EST, you write:

- > My question to the Scouts-L group is:
- >1) Do we award the rank now?
- >2) Award the rank with the rest of his Den in order to foster team spirit?
- >3) Does earning a rank mean that you have some comprehension of what you

have

>done, learning and using a new skill, showing teamwork with your Den & Pack,

>or does it mean you went through the motions to get a signature in the book

>without "Do Your Best".

Hi Steve,

As a former Cubmaster, Den Leader, and just about every other position in Cub

Scouts, I can off this:

1) Immediate recognition is the rule. Do not wait for the Blue & Gold in February. This is not a group thing. Advancement is an individual thing. That's why we have the parents sign off the achievements. A boy should advance at his own pace. Do you promote the use of Den Advancement Charts.

These are wonderful tools for peer pressure. When I used it in my den, we suddenly had all the boys completing their requirements.

2) Absolutley not! This boy has completed the requirements and deserves the recognition, as soon as possible.

3) Since the parents sign-off that the boy has done "his best" in completing the requirements, you cannot contest this. If the boy did not do his best, then that is between the parent and him. If you feel real strongly about this, you could contact the parent, and cautiously inquire about it, but the reality is, once the parent signs it off, there isn't much you can do about it.

I have see this before, and the boy really did know his stuff. So you can't judge it just on the time period it takes to sign it off.

Keep concentrating on the FUN part. That is the backbone of the program. Then all the rest becomes fun too!

Take care,



**Jerry**  
**Cub Roundtable Commissioner/Cub Training Chairman**  
**Nutmeg District - Connecticut Rivers Council**

and a good ol' Bear, too!

**Date: Wed, 1 Nov 1995 10:16:00 PST**  
**From: Murphy Peter <MurphyP@RND3.INDY.TCE.COM>**  
**Subject: Cub Scout Advancement**

Steve,

This is one I feel VERY strongly on. We are dealing with 7 to 10 year olds. Immediate recognition is very important. That's why we have immediate recognition kits. A boy should be awarded his badges at the earliest pack meeting possible. He deserves the recognition for being faster than his peers and it can be a motivator for the other boys. Even in Boy Scouts a lot of Troops give the badge at the Troop meeting following the BOR and then give the official card at the COH which may be months away.

In my wife's first den, using the immediate recognition kit proved to be a huge motivator. One boy had older brothers in Scouts so he started the school year of his Wolf year with 9 of 12 requirements already completed. The other boys then worked very hard to catch up and 5 of the 6 boys received their Wolf badge at the November pack meeting (#6 got it at the next pack meeting in January).

A few years ago at roundtable, a CM giving a talk on ceremonies stressed that you don't want to use the same ceremony over and over because they become stale. His solution was to award Wolfs, Bear, Webelos, and AOL badges only once a year so that the associated ceremony would be fresh. My solution is to create a few new ceremonies every year so that after a few years I have several to choose from.

As for the parents signing off to readily. The only thing you should do is have a parents' meeting in each den at the beginning of the year and explain the program, requirements, expectations, and standards. After that you are not to retest a boy or question the parents on what they sign off. Heavens, the den leader has too much to do with just recording the progress of each boy and putting together the den meetings.

YiS,

**Peter Murphy**  
CM, P125, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Del-Mi District, Crossroads of America  
murphyp@tceemail.indy.tce.com

**Date:** Thu, 7 Dec 1995 10:16:45 EST  
**From:** Peter Farnham <pfarnham@ASBMB.FASEB.ORG>  
**Subject:** Re[2]: eagle award

Vince and all,

You raised the issue of the subjectivity of assessing whether a scout shows "scout spirit." This is indeed a subjective call, and the subjectivity is probably intentional. But I had a good working definition explained to me at the NCAC University of Scouting last March. Basically, scout spirit amounts to attendance, appearance, and attitude.

Attendance is, obviously, showing up to scout functions, on time, participating, and staying to the end.

Appearance means at least making an effort at proper uniforming, and not showing up to troop meetings in cutoff sweat pants, tee-shirts, and backwards-turned baseball caps.

Attitude is still somewhat subjective, but one has some measures one can use. Does the scout make an effort to comply with the points of the scout oath and law? Does he do what he is asked, for example? Is he trustworthy, loyal, etc. in your experience? Would you go camping with him if you didn't have to?

I have told my scouts that I use these three concepts to measure scout spirit.

YiS,

**Pete Farnham**  
SM, Troop 113  
GW District, NCAC  
Alexandria, VA  
pfarnham@capaccess.org

**Date:** Fri, 8 Dec 1995 06:52:30 -0500

**From: Ed Henderson <BigEdBSA@AOL.COM>**

**Subject: Personal Management Merit Badge becomes real for Georgia Scout Troop**

**For the first time in many years, our troop actually found itself with a surplus of cash last year at recharter time. We were getting ready to start on Personal Management Merit Badge, and decided to make it a real learning experience. We have five patrols and decided to give each of them \$200 and a challenge. They had one year to invest it in any of the options for requirement # 4 of the badge (the stuff it in the mattress option being the only one excluded!!! - As agreed on by the PLC). The winning patrol at year's end got to keep its money for a patrol campout and party.**

**A year later and I am thrilled with the response! Each of the patrols were very excited about the challenge, they consulted with the Merit Badge Counselor, as well as the leader of a local investment club who visited at one of the meetings and did a presentation. The scouts looked through copies of Money Magazine, and even used the internet to look up facts on stocks, etc.**

**Here is what they did:**

**The Bat Patrol used their \$200 to buy a \$100 EE Savings Bond for \$50, They opened a savings account with \$100 at 3.5% interest, and they spent \$50 to buy stock shares in a Junior Achievement Company that that Patrol Leader was involved in. They did well on the JA stock, getting a \$.35 dividend on each of the 50 shares for a grand total \$246.33 on their investment.**

**The Oglethorpe Patrol (he founded Georgia) bought a No Load Mutual Fund with the Founders Fund and netted \$229.40.**

**The Indigo Snake Patrol (a rare species found in GA on the endangered species list) used most of their money to make 3 1/4" metal buttons for Valentines Day to sell at school. They did quite well with raw materials only costing \$.18 each and with them selling the buttons for \$1.00. They had some raw materials left over and donated those to the troop to use at our last Scout**

Show. They used the rest of the money in a Christmas Club Savings Account.

Their revenue came out to \$289.55

The last two patrols, the Sequoyah Patrol and the Chief McIntosh Patrol each

spent their money buying Stocks on the Stock Market. They used Dividend

Reinvestment Plans that some companies (Coca-Cola, Exxon, Disney, Westinghouse, etc.) have which allows individuals to purchase stocks directly

from a company without using a broker or paying a commission. One of the

patrol leaders got so involved, he started checking his patrol's portfolio each week on America On Line, and had the editor of the local paper list the

stock performance of their stocks (the paper thought it was a great story).

The Sequoyah's netted \$248.03 and the Chief McIntosh Patrol hit some home

runs as the NYSE hit 5000 to generate \$306.75.

Well the Chief McIntosh Patrol won the competition, the patrol has decided to

go rappelling at Camp Thunder! All together the year long investment generated \$1,320.06. Each patrol had to do an end of the year report to the PLC. The other patrols are returning their funds which will be \$1013.31 to the troop. WOW!!! Our troop got all of its money back (okay, so we lost a little with inflation), and the kids are pumped! At the last committee meeting I had the parents tell me that between this badge and Consumer Buying

(which we did just before BSA National foolishly did away with the badge) their scouts have all started helping more with shopping, using coupons, and

over half of the scouts now practice some kind of savings. My ASPL & the Troop Scribe even have both invested in stocks of their own!!!! We will have our annual PLC planning retreat lockin next week. I have already been

told that all of the patrols want to continue the contest and I have been booked next month to explain our contest to the other Scoutmasters at roundtable. This has been a wonderful experiment, and the scouts did a lot

better than I thought they would. By making our projects real, we also add

some zip to our meetings and badge work.

YIS,

Ed Henderson  
Scoutmaster BSA Troop 12  
Flint River Council, Griffin GA

From mfbowman@CapAccess.org Wed Dec 6 13:23:26 1995

Date: Wed, 6 Dec 1995 13:23:25 -0500 (EST)

Subject: Re: Advice needed(long but serious)

Mike Montoya,

It sounds to me like you are on the right track in counseling with the young man to work a bit harder to show Scout Spirit and demonstrate leadership. One of the primary aims of Scouting is to promote citizenship and what you are doing will help this Scout in the long run.

In thinking about your question a few things come to mind:

It is too late to wonder about what the Boards of Review and Scoutmaster Conferences accomplished in the past, but not too late to see that they are done properly in the future. For each rank the SM Conference should be a growth session addressing such problems. Similarly, each Board of Review should be asking the Scout what he is going to do better, how he is going to improve, how he is going to use his skills, etc. Aside from verifying that the Scout completed his rank requirements, these are opportunities that should be used at each rank and not just Eagle to assess whether a Scout is growing and help him grow more. This is part of the "adult association" method where a Scout gets critical feedback and through reflective discussion can decide what to do to surmount problems.

Your Eagle-candidate may be different in other settings precisely because his father is not around. If his father is riding him hard, he may be acting out a rejection of that authority (normal adolescent development) without even knowing he's doing it. Maybe the best thing would be for his father to step down and just let his son have a chance to bloom on his own. One of the hardest things as a parent is to allow a child to make mistakes and learn how to decide things on their own. This dad may be having some real problems in knowing when to back off. Maybe some of

the other adults need to tell him this is a possibility - he doesn't have to like the input, but hopefully it will cause him some reflection.

I know that in my own case it was critical to back away from the Troop to give my own son some breathing space and to make it clear to him that it was his decision and not mine whether he would become an Eagle Scout and when. Guess what, he decided he really wanted to be an Eagle and still working on it as a Life Scout with almost 30 merit badges.

Not every young man matures at the same rate and it may take longer for some to show Scouting spirit and leadership qualities, but we are here to help them learn, let them fail, help them get up and try again, and to support them all the way to success.

This young man will learn far more from having to do a little extra growing than if he were passed through to avoid the problem and some day farther down the road, he'll be thankful for the experience, though right now it might seem hard for him.

As to the SM, well he really should be doing the conference, but in many Troops this is something that gets delegated to ASMs as well. And there is nothing wrong in getting input from other leaders to be more effective in helping the Scout grow more from the conference.

Speaking only for myself in the Scouting Spirit, Michael F. Bowman  
DDC-Training, GW Dist. Nat Capital Area Council  
mfbowman@CAPACCESS.ORG

From mfbowman@CapAccess.org Mon Dec 11 03:12:38 1995  
Subject: Relatives, SMs at Eagle BOR

Hugh,

The 1995 Advancement Policies and Procedures Committee Guide removes any ambiguity concerning Eagle Scout Boards of Review (BOR) that you saw in your edition. At page 18 of the 1995 version you will find:

**"8. ... Unit leaders, assistant unit leaders, relatives, or guardians may not serve as members of a Scout's board of review."**

**"9. The candidate's unit leader introduces him to the members of the board of review. The unit leader may remain in the room, but does not participate in the board of review. The unit leader may be called on to clarify a point in question. In no case should a relative or guardian of the candidate attend the review, even as a unit leader. . . . After the review, the candidate and his unit leader leave the room while the board members discuss the acceptability of the candidate as an Eagle Scout. The decisions must be unanimous. . . ."**

**It seems fairly clear that a relative can bring the Scout to the BOR, but cannot sit in the audience. Likewise the unit leader can observe, but is not a member of the board.**

**Speaking only for myself in the Scouting Spirit, Michael F. Bowman  
DDC-Training, GW Dist. Nat Capital Area Council  
mfbowman@CAPACCESS.ORG**

**From mfbowman@CapAccess.org Tue Dec 12 02:45:30 1995  
Subject: Re: BOR Help -- to retest?**

**Rob,**

**The Board of Review doesn't retest skills, because its function is to assure that the aims of Scouting are being met; e.g, citizenship, character development and fitness. The skills are just one method of Scouting in achieving the end and nothing more. Sure the skills will come in handy and help the Scout better enjoy the outdoors activities that make the program work, but they are not an end-all. The only time to test the skill is when the Scout presents himself to pass the requirement and validation is in the SM Conference. After that it is a done deal. You share a concern that many leaders have about "lost" or "forgotten" skills. This is something that is going to happen and there are going to be some Scouts that are immature.**

**Our program is designed to help them grow. My question would be have they progressed from wherever they started? Are they showing signs of character development, better citizenship, etc. If so, then I'd say we have a success, even if they don't do well with a bowline.**

**Rob, I am proud to say that I am an Eagle Scout, but if you asked me to**

tie a bowline, I'd probably require a dozen tries to get it right, if I was asked. For some reason, I just had the devil's own time. Does that mean I should turn in my medal? Of course not, that is not what we are measuring. We are looking beyond the skill to what is happening in the Scout's personal growth.

In my own case, I was on the verge of going to reform school after setting voting precinct signs on fire at school, when my folks really got involved in getting me into Scouting. That changed everything. The kids I ran with at the time are now either dead or in prison. I've been more fortunate and it was because of the way of thinking that Scouting instilled.

Yeah, I'm one of those that didn't master every skill. But then again, I learned much more. And I can still open the Handbook or Fieldbook and relearn. For me it is easy to see some of these Scouts through my own experiences and know that more important developments are taking place, albeit sometimes slowly.

If my Scoutmaster had been running a failure factory instead of taking every opportunity to reward achievements, I probably would have quit and you can guess the result. We want to keep things positive because it brings positive results.

You may also be surprised that these same Scouts years later will remember a great deal more than you'd think of things they have learned in the skills area. I can recall many times as an ASM in the 70's seeing boys that barely passed and then went on to do great things.

All that said, I don't mean to imply that we should give ranks away. Far from that we need to challenge and expect much. But once the Scout passes the test, we need to go on. If he forgets or has trouble, lets maximize what he has been good at.

The beauty of Scouting is what it does in developing a whole person with self-esteem enough to make good life decisions. But we are dealing with young people who are not perfect and that requires understanding on our part.

Speaking only for myself in the Scouting Spirit, Michael F. Bowman  
DDC-Training, GW Dist. Nat Capital Area Council  
mfbowman@CAPACCESS.ORG



**Date:** Wed, 13 Dec 1995 06:50:05 -0800  
**From:** "Timothy J O'Leary" <tjo@CPTCHR.AFIP.MIL>  
**Subject:** Scout Spirit, BOR's, Eagle and Otherwise

The messages on these topics show, I think properly, that there is no single "right" approach for judging "scout spirit," using the BOR process, and using rank advancement as a tool.

To me, scout spirit is everything. I think that the newest way in which the requirements are written is about right. Something like "Show Scout Spirit by demonstrating that you have lived the Oath and Law in your everyday life."

To me, this means that the requirement is not about attending troop meetings and campouts, and that to deny either Eagle or Tenderfoot advancement on the basis of attendance misses the point. On the other hand, a scout who is beating up another scout for Monday night recreation is definitely not demonstrating Scout spirit. The BOR can decide not to advance a Scout based on its own observations, I suppose, but it may be a terrible mistake (see final paragraph); more importantly, the BOR gives the troop committee the opportunity and responsibility to contribute its collective experience to thoughts about how the troop program can contribute to the scout's development.

As committee chair, I go on every third or fourth campout with the troop; camping is a great way to see scout spirit in action, but so is after school, with friends, and at home. Some of the things I think of when I think about "Scout spirit:"

**A Scout is**

**Trustworthy** - if he's the waterman, does he keep it filled? If he's fireman, does he wonder away? If he was expected to provide a skit, is he ready?

**Loyal** - does he build the other boys up, or tear them down? Does he press the "hot buttons" of the boy with a temper, or keep others from pressing them?

**Helpful** - during after meal cleanup does he help out, or leave all the work for the others while he whittles a stick?

**Friendly** - is he pleasant? But don't penalize the "shy kid."

**Courteous - does he treat everyone with dignity?**

**Kind - when someone's feeling are hurt, how does he react?**

**Obedient - when his parents come to pick him up at the end of the campout, does he get his act together, or does he stall?**

**Cheerful - does he sulk when it is his turn to hose down the summer camp latrine?**

**Thrifty - does he use the propane stove to warm himself on a cold morning, or does he reserve it for cooking?**

**Brave - does he have the courage of character to do the right thing, even when the folks around him are urging him in the wrong direction. This one is usually best assessed outside of scout activities!**

**Clean - clean hands, clean mouth?**

**Reverent - does he practice what he preaches. Is his "Great Sprit" moving his life?**

**The Tenderfoot Scout is showing Scout spirit when he pitches in some of the time. The Eagle candidate is showing Scout spirit when he realizes that he is setting an example which will help the other Scouts to be better people. Everyone - older scouts, SM, ASM, parents, teachers, committee members, needs to help build Scout spirit. Scouting adults need to remember that "Scout Spirit" is what the whole program is really about, and that cooking, pitching tents, building fires, map and compass, uniforms, being a patrol leader, etc. are ONLY TOOLS TO DEVELOP SCOUT SPIRIT.**

**Back to the BOR. When we conduct a BOR we need to be looking at the Scout, and not worrying too much about whether he can tie a sheet bend, but rather asking "Is our program helping this Scout learn to live the Oath and Law in his everyday life?" We should ask the scout to "wait a while" for rank advancement if this will help to meet this objective, but we need to be careful. If the BOR in your troop has not used this as a tool relatively frequently, he may be branded as "FAILURE," and leave the troop. Then we are the "FAILURES," because we lose the only tools we have....**

Tim O'Leary, tjo@afip.mil  
CC Troop 772, CM Pack 1072, Silver Spring, MD  
I'm still trying to live up to the Eagle ideal.

Date: Wed, 13 Dec 1995 10:57:15 -0500  
From: "Paul H. Brown" <phbrown@CAPACCESS.ORG>  
Subject: Re: BOR Help -- to retest?

On Wed, 13 Dec 1995, Stephen Hoar wrote:

>>

> I enjoy reading Pauls comments as they are grounded in common sense.

I can use all the adulation you can dish out! Keep it up. :-)

> Too often we get so focused on the details that we forget the goal. It  
> all harkens back to the Goal of scouting. Is the goal to produce good  
> wilderness campers skilled in low impact camping and out door skills?  
> No. The goal focuses on producing leaders well grounded in the ethics  
> of what it takes to be a decent and productive member of society. The  
> BOR therefore should be measuring the progress the scout is making  
> toward attaining that goal. The skills, the game of scouting is merely  
> the framework within which we take him toward that goal. Where you  
> have been is not so nearly as important as where you are going.  
>

Ah, but part of the "game" is to disguise the goal. Why is it that the Official Scout Handbook doesn't come right out and discuss the aims and methods of scouting? They have to be "teased" out of the chapters in the back (if they're there at all). We don't say to the scouts, "Your goal is to become a good citizen. These ranks requirements are just steps to achieve that goal." No. We let the scouts pretend that we think the ranks are the goal. We keep them distracted by learning the requirements for the next rank, while we're (unbeknownst to them) teaching them ethical behaviour. Alas, for some parents, we disguise the real goal from them, too. It is so much easier for them to treat their son as the Webelos cub he once was, and lead him by the hand through the ranks. :-(

Keeping their eye focused on the goal works just great in daytime. When you try to keep focused in the dark, you can't see what you want to. Thats why you have to use peripheral vision in the dark.

These scouts are "in the dark" when it comes to ethical learning. If they focus on ethics, they don't get it. If they focus on scouting, they learn the ethics.

(OK, so the analogy isn't perfect. Neither am I. I just try....)

<snip...much good stuff deleted>

YiS,

Paul H. Brown, UC, GW District, National Capital Area Council  
phbrown@capaccess.org

Date: Wed, 13 Dec 1995 14:21:28 MST  
From: Jonathan Dixon <dixonj@ROCOCO.COLORADO.EDU>  
Subject: Re: Inactive Life Scout

> Date: Wed, 13 Dec 1995 11:12:37 -0500  
> From: John Pannell <PANNELLJ@DELPHI.COM>  
>  
> Regardless of what we may think about the importance of the Eagle Award, it  
> no longer has quite that prestige in the eyes of those at the upper levels  
> of the BSA. :( While we can lobby to change policies and requirements we  
> cannot add to them in any way. Adding additional criteria and expectations  
> as several of us seem to want cannot be done. Thus, we must obey the  
> dictums of the National Organization in this regard: A Scout is Obedient.  
>  
> Personally, I would like to see several things changed as has been  
> discussed here. Too much emphasis has been placed on how to "give" boys  
> their Eagle Award. We seem too willing, as an organization, to rapidly  
> push  
> boys through the ranks so they can earn Eagle before they think about  
> driving. In the case of an appeal, the views of the unit level Scouters  
> have no bearing or relevance. IMO, these attitudes should be changed.  
> Unfortunately, the litigiousness in our society may actually hinder this.

Without wanting to revisit the "young Eagles" topic yet again, I do think that it needs to be pointed out that the requirements today are actually somewhat more involved than they were at most times in the past. The main problem is (as has been mentioned here) is that things like scout spirit are sluffed over at lower ranks. This results in scouts coming before their Eagle BOR who have never been expected to be showing that spirit.

I don't see that the organization is looking for ways to push boys through the ranks (personally I don't see 1st Class in a year as pushing, especially since there are still a lot of boys who aren't even making that -- 1st Class in 6 months (like I did) is pushing, but that isn't an organizational push). What I see is some adults pushing boys through (especially their own sons), while the other adults stand around and say nothing until the boy gets to the Eagle BOR, when they panic about this brat getting Eagle.

The BOR is intended to serve as an evaluation of the troop's program, not as a group that sets a final set of hurdles to a rank. This is why National tends to hold the appeals to the standard of "did the boy complete the requirements as stated". The unit-level Scouters have had 6 chances to hold up the boy if he wasn't showing scout spirit; if they haven't done so, that isn't National's fault. Perhaps these BORs should prompt the unit-level scouters to re-evaluate how things are being handled throughout the advancement process.

--

Jon Dixon  
dixonj@colorado.edu  
<http://spot.colorado.edu/~dixonj/>

From mfbowman@CapAccess.org Tue Dec 12 04:40:41 1995  
Subject: Re: Relatives, SMs at Eagle BOR

Bob,

The issue you raised of a conflict between Advancement and YPP policies is interesting. YPP does say that all of Scouting is open to the parents. It of course does not say when or how much.

YPP was designed to reduce the chances for abuse directed at Scouts. In an Eagle BOR where the SM can be present with at least three other adults, the criteria of YPP are fairly met and the risk is nil. YPP should be satisfied. And my answer to the parents, would be that they have participated in the process all along, but here it is critical for the Scout to be able to speak freely and frankly without pressure or fear of embarrassment in front of his parents.

This seems to be that the one time in Scouting where parents are definitely not to participate is the specific event of the Eagle BOR. However,

since they have participated in the process and the intent of YPP is being served, I would say that the conflict will only arise if a particular parent want to play armchair lawyer and try to get in. This parent should be counseled about what the BOR is going to do, how it operates, and the need for his/her son to be able to speak freely. The same thing would happen in a personal growth counseling session with a professional counselor and this is about personal growth. Maybe that would help. Then again there's always one.

If push came to shove, I suspect that the local SE would consult with National and they would allow the parent in, but only after trying hard to avoid this result. Such a parent would be doing the Scout a disservice in my opinion and would be making the review all that much more difficult for the Scout.

Some of have commented on parents that just have to be present for everything that junior does. Too much of this is stifling to development. When do they plan to stop and allow independent growth? When the kid goes off to college to experiment with all that was previously forbidden? I've seen a few where I wondered how the 24 year old child was going to be allowed to be alone with his bride on his wedding night.

Speaking only for myself in the Scouting Spirit, Michael F. Bowman  
DDC-Training, GW Dist. Nat Capital Area Council  
mfbowman@CAPACCESS.ORG

From mfbowman@CapAccess.org Tue May 7 23:05:23 1996  
Date: Tue, 7 May 1996 23:05:22 -0400 (EDT)  
From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@CapAccess.org>  
To: SCOUTS-L - Youth Groups Discussion List <SCOUTS-L@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU>  
cc: Multiple recipients of list SCOUTS-L <SCOUTS-L@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU>  
Subject: Advancement in an Explorer Post

The Explorer Leader Handbook at page A-36 states that a Scout can continue advancement to Eagle as an Explorer. The exact text follows:

Any male Explorer who has achieved the First Class rank as a Boy Scout in a troop or Varsity Scout in a team may continue working toward the Star, Life, and Eagle awards while an Explorer up to his 18th birthday. He

must meet the requirements as prescribed in The Official Boy Scout Handbook and the current Boy Scouts Requirements. Leadership requirements may be met by the Explorer serving as president, vice-president, secretary, or treasurer in his post, or as boatswain's mate, yeoman, purser, or storekeeper in his ship. The Scoutmaster conference will be conducted by the Advisor or Skipper. As the Explorer meets the requirements for the Star and Life ranks, a board of review is conducted by the post or ship committee. The Eagle board of review follows the procedure established by the local council.

Speaking Only for Myself in the Scouting Spirit, Michael F. Bowman  
a/k/a Professor Beaver (WB), ASTA #2566, OA Vigil Honor '71, Eagle  
Scout '67, Serving as Deputy District Commissioner for Training,  
G.W.Dist., Nat. Capital Area Council, BSA - mfbowman@capaccess.org

Date: Thu, 25 Jul 1996 07:52:48 -0700  
From: Rodger Morris <rodger@FISHNET.NET>  
Subject: Scout Advancement

At 09:25 AM 7/25/96 -24000, Robert Morley wrote:

...

>An active troop should have no problem completing these requirements  
within  
>18 months. I don't see a need to rush it any further. The first 12 months  
>should be spent concentrating on rank advancement, with MB as a side  
item.

...

I have a small troop with 10 Scouts that I became Scoutmaster for at the  
end of March this year. Your assertion that the primary focus of a new  
Scout  
should be upon rank advancement is generally true, but there are  
exceptions to that rule.

I have a Scout who joined my troop 3 months ago. He has earned 7 merit  
badges in that time. He is close to Tenderfoot and not all that far away  
from Second Class rank. In addition to the prescribed Boy Scout  
advancement  
program, Daniel is learning about computers and is teaching himself HTML  
programming by improving our troop's web homepage.

I respectfully submit that Daniel is getting as much out of Scouting as

a Scout who has advanced a rank and who has not earned any merit badges as yet.

Another new Scout I have has been a Scout for 2 months. He has earned 3 merit badges and is about halfway to Tenderfoot. He was the only Scout at our summer camp to earn Indian Lore merit badge when we went to summer camp a few weeks ago. Matt is programming in HTML along with

Daniel and his patrol leader Adam. He became interested in the bagpipes when we went to the Scottish highland games over the Memorial Day weekend. I loaned him my second practice chanter and a tutorial after our troop meeting on Tuesday.

I respectfully submit that Matt is getting as much out of Scouting as a Scout who has advanced in rank but has not earned any merit badges.

Both Matt and Daniel, along with Adam, their patrol leader, entered a darts tournament at the highland games in the novice division. Daniel took a third place medal. While this did not directly further their advancement to First Class, it was a fun activity that their Dilbert Patrol elected to do as a patrol.

For awhile, my troop went darts-mad. We had a troop darts tournament, and we may do this again from time to time as a troop activity.

Another of the Scouts I have has been in my troop for two years. He is a good Scout, but more inclined to emulate the sloth than the gazelle when it comes to Scout advancement. All of a sudden, Sam blossomed and has advanced through Second Class to First Class Scout with all but one of his merit badges for Star completed. He also has become interested in the Scottish great highland bagpipes since I brought them to summer camp. I'll be getting my third practice chanter back from my Wolf Cub nephew and teaching him a bit about the fingering techniques necessary to play the pipes.

Lerning the bagpipes is probably a passing fancy for these lads. However, should one of them discover that he has found a true avocation, I'll steer him towards the Los Angeles & District Pipe Band in our area. The pipe major is a Scouter, and one of the pipers in the band is a Scouter and a music merit badge counselor, in addition to being our Order of the Arrow chapter advisor.



**Another Scout of mine is autistic. He has been in my troop since October and has only passed a few requirements towards Tenderfoot. He earned archery merit badge at summer camp. His mother tells me that he lives for Scouting activities.**

**Bottom line:**

**Scout advancement is only one of eight methods we use to achieve the three aims of Scouting. Our Scouts differ in their interests. I try to find things that interest my Scouts and then encourage them to go after these awards. Then, I use the strengths they have developed to encourage them to try things that they are not so good at doing.**

**In re earning merit badges versus advancement to First Class Scout, I counsel my Scouts as to the tradeoffs involved. Then, I let them make their own decisions as to how they wish to proceed, and I monitor their progress towards their objectives and we talk about lessons learned and make any needed adjustments based upon lessons learned.**

**Of course, we provide activities that facilitate advancement to First Class Scout within the troop annual program. I don't just leave them to their own devices without a supportive framework in which to operate.**

**;-)**

**A Scout is the prime agent in furthering his own education within Scouting. He is not a passive receptacle into which Scouting skills are poured.**

**As I remind my Scouts and fellow leaders, Baden-Powell once said:**

**"Scouting is a game for boys, under the leadership of boys, under the direction of a man."**

**and when asked why we do camping and other outdoor activities:**

**"Why, we do them because that is what boys like. If boys liked knitting, why then we should teach them knitting."**

**Or in the case of my troop, HTML programming, darts and bagpiping, as well as an outdoor program that encompassed 32 nights in the field last year.**

**As always, your mileage may vary. Every Scout is different.**

**Yours in Scouting,**

**Rodger**

**Rodger Morris** <rodger@fishnet.net>  
**Scoutmaster, Troop 852** Woodbadge 416-18  
**Ventura County Council** Philmont, 1973  
**Camarillo, California, USA** "I used to be a Beaver..."

**Date:** Sat, 27 Jul 1996 22:35:28 -0400 (EDT)  
**From:** "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@CapAccess.org>  
**To:** SCOUTS-L - Youth Groups Discussion List <SCOUTS-L@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU>  
**Subject:** Advancement & Recognitions - Step Back to Look

Over the past week the list has absolutely been red hot with messages passing back and forth on Cub Scout beltloop recognitions, Camping Merit Badge and the like. Sometimes I think we need to step back and see things in perspective.

We in Scouting use recognition and advancement to encourage Scouts to develop in character, grow in citizenship and increase in fitness. If we step back and look at the whole program we can see that we start with small steps.

With Cubs we begin by encouraging them to try their best both in rank and other recognition awards (and never stop) with their families having the controlling say in whether an award was earned. The idea is fairly simple - we want them to begin to try activities that will help them grow in positive ways the rest of their lives. When they have done their best, we recognize them. That is the reason why each of the beltloop pamphlets states "I earned my belt loop by doing my best to learn about the things in this book AND by using the physical techniques in practice OR play in my den or pack or in my community or as an individual cub working with an adult." It does not create an absolute standard, require reading, etc., only that the Cub do his best to learn about the things in the book whether he reads it, it is read to him, or explained to a group.

With the early Cub ranks the standards are more concrete, but allow parents to determine when a Cub has done his best.

During the Webelos years as the Cub is beginning to assume more

responsibility for himself and is beginning to learn how to deal with other people outside his family more, he also must earn the approval of his Webelos Den Leader to advance. The shift to an outside approval is set to match his developmental growth gradually moving him to become more self-reliant.

As he moves into Boy Scouting he experiences yet more of a shift where he becomes more responsible for his own rank advancement. Instead of relying on adults to run the program, he learns that he must interact with his peers and learn skills from them, which helps to foster citizenship; e.g., learning how to live in a community. The role of adults shifts more towards counseling and advising (adult association) with the Scouts running their program through the PLC. SPLs and PLs help in the advancement process. Yes, adults still have final approval for advancement through the SM Conference and BORs, but much of the teaching and skill training for Tenderfoot through First Class has shifted to the youth leaders in a Troop.

To make this growing process work, the requirements need to be and are uniform for ranks and merit badges, so that a unit cannot substitute its own requirements. This is to prevent requirements being made so easy that a Scout is not challenged or so hard/difficult that recognition becomes too hard to achieve. We want the Scouts to be able to succeed in meeting challenges where they can grow. The requirements while not always perfect are there for the reason that they have been tested over time and work. It is at this point we should step back again and realize that the advancement part of the program is only a method and not an end in and of itself.

The idea is that we will expose the Scouts to learning experiences where they can grow and succeed in meeting challenges. If you see advancement in perspective, then you can understand that it is not appropriate for us to add or detract from the requirements as written. If it says 20 days of camping, it means 20 days of camping without conditions; e.g. only after you started the merit badge, only if it was with this Troop, etc. Remember that we are trying to get the Scout to try new skills, hone others, and grow, not become an absolute expert in a particular area. Merit Badges are there to encourage a Scout to learn skills that will help in his Scoutcraft, to explore areas that might later become hobbies, to tryout areas that may be of career interest, and to learn how better to be an active and participating citizen his society as an adult. As a result,

when the Scout has made measurable progress he rewarded by recognition of his completion of the requirements as written.

Speaking for myself only in the Scouting Spirit, Michael F. Bowman  
Dep. Dist. Commissioner-Training, G.W.Dist., NCAC, BSA (Virginia)  
U.S.Scouting Service Project FTP Site Administrator (PC Area)  
ftp1.scouters.org/usscouts; e-mail: mfbowman@capaccess.org

Date: Sat, 3 Aug 1996 16:29:27 -0400 (EDT)  
From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@CapAccess.org>  
To: SCOUTS-L - Youth Groups Discussion List <SCOUTS-L@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU>  
Subject: Re: advancement

Marc,

You've raised a good question. If you look at the SM Handbook, the Junior Leader Handbook, etc., you'll find that they all talk about leaders signing after requirements are completed without saying whether this is to be done by adult leaders or junior leaders.

In practice I've seen Troops where junior leaders teach skills and when an achievement is completed they advise an ASM who signs. In other Troops junior leaders have signed for completion of achievements for Tenderfoot through First Class. There is some flexibility built in here. In a new Troop just starting, it may be necessary for an ASM to review the work until the Scouts can do this. In an established Troop, there's no reason why we shouldn't trust the Scouts to be involved. And it goes a long way towards leadership development for the junior leaders to teach and pass younger Scouts on skills. Use your junior leaders - coach 'em and they can do much.

From the ancient history department: I can still remember my days in the Bat Patrol of Troop 13 and how hard I had to work at some of the requirements for First Class before my SPL would sign off. He was a lot tougher than the SM and you really had to know your stuff. He got some coaching from the SM on when to be tougher or to ease up, but did a pretty good job of seeing that the younger Scouts made it through. Last

I heard he was a Vice President of a Fortune 500 Company - who knows, maybe his leadership skills from Scouting paid off. :-)

**Speaking only for myself in the Scouting Spirit, Michael F. Bowman  
Dep. Dist. Commissioner-Training, G.W. Dist., NCAC, BSA (Virginia)  
U. S. Scouting Service Project FTP Site Administrator (PC Area)  
ftp1 or ftp2.scouters.com/usscouts E-mail: mfbowman@capaccess.org**

Date: Thu, 9 Jan 1997 12:18:58 -0700  
From: Amick Robert <ami ck@SPOT. COLORADO. EDU>  
Subject: Re: Cracked "Eagle" Egg  
To: Multiple recipients of list SCOUTS-L <SCOUTS-L@TCUBVM. IS. TCU. EDU>

Linda:

The tendency of parents and leaders to compel Scouts to achieve rank through negative reinforcement ("...get Eagle NOW or quit...") is absolutely the wrong approach. Anyone who understands teenagers will know that first it is disrespectful and humiliating for them, and second, it is rightfully THEIR decision as to when and under what circumstances they wish to proceed. The old adage that "...honey attracts more flies than vinegar.." can be applied in this situation. Many teenagers react to such negative reinforcement with an unparalleled stubbornness because they are in effect being "told what to do" with no input or discussion from them.

Use the method of quietly providing "windows of opportunity" for the Scout. Often, Scouts tend to look at the magnitude of achieving Eagle as an "elephant" and need to be shown that the task can be achieved easily "one bite at a time." Then you can help the Scout look at what he can easily achieve by assessing what merit badges remain for him to do, and who might be available to help him on completing them. Similarly, if the project is the "stumbling block," take a little time to brainstorm some project ideas, help him to narrow down choices and pick one he really is interested in doing, and then help him select resource persons and contacts to actually facilitate the project. You will find that little perks such as this are greatly

appreciated by the Scout and often result in his becoming highly motivated to finish. In so doing, you have helped the Scout learn to set goals that are measurable and achievable on his own terms, and helped him develop "tools" and skills he will use throughout his life.

However, bear in mind that Scouting is NOT just about getting advancement. Many Scouts have told me they much prefer the activities and friendship and fellowship over getting ranks, and that should be their prerogative. It is after all their program and should be their decision. If you can somehow integrate their enjoyment of the activities with concurrent advancement (e.g., "...let's get you credit for camping merit badge while you're on this campout, and get it signed off..") in no time at all, they will be well ahead of the game, and still having FUN which is what the Founder intended. When Scouting starts becoming like school/homework, it is no wonder that teenagers "turn off" when they should be excited and enthusiastic about the program.

Another major "turnaround" in motivation often results when a Scout participates in a "mountain top" experience such as a high adventure trip to Philmont, Florida SeaBase, National or World Scout Jamboree, etc. I have seen many Scouts and Explorers who were singularly unmotivated to advance or otherwise be active, really come back "changed" and inspired after such an experience. Wild horses couldn't keep them from really "digging in" and getting their Eagle, running for SPL, doing camping, and many of the other great opportunities. One mom said of her son after returning from Philmont.. "Are you sure this is my son?..He looks the same but he sure doesn't act the same.." What a tribute!

It is not unusual for teenagers to get to a "plateau" at Life rank, and "hold" for several years. Many of our best and most outstanding Scouts have done this, and actually remarked that it was their choice and preference to do so; and many push the "18" deadline, before they get it done, but they usually do so on their own terms.

Others will get inspired and finish it at fourteen or fifteen, and that too is good if it is their choice. Some will not achieve Eagle because they choose not to do so, and as hard as that "pill" is to swallow for a leader and a parent, it is still the

choice of the Scout and should be respected. I know several outstanding young men who were very close to getting Eagle, but for their own reasons made a conscious decision not to do so, despite full knowledge of what the advantages would be; they are just as successful in their lives as their fellow Scouts who did achieve the rank. To me, they exemplify the highest ideals of the Eagle, and that really is what Scouting is all about.

So the bottom line is help them by showing them opportunities to incorporate advancement while having fun, be a resource and a mentor, and treat them as colleagues with respect and appreciation of their wishes and dreams.

In another vein, leaders should never inappropriately restrict or delay advancement to Eagle by younger Scouts who are motivated and excited to advance. I have heard several leaders justify such delays in order to "keep young Scouts in the program longer, and make them 'better' Eagle Scouts." Such discouragement often results in the Scout losing interest or even dropping out of Scouting altogether.

Units with well balanced and comprehensive opportunities for trips, camping, high adventure, and leadership training, will find that Scouts are so busy having fun, they advance in a timely manner, and get Eagle in early to mid teens, rather than at 12 or 13 which is often "feared" by leaders as being "too early." For some, it may be; for others it may be totally appropriate; but in any case, it should be the decision primarily made by the Scout, knowing all the facts and advantages/disadvantages.

Make sure Scouts know the "door is always open" when the Scout is ready to move on his terms and motivation. But most of all, be sure they know what the time limits and constraints are if they are pushing the "18" deadline, so that they are not inadvertently put in a position of ineligibility without recourse.

Hope this helps. . best wishes

Bob Amick, Explorer Advisor, High Adventure Explorer Post 72,  
Boulder, CO

Date: Thu, 9 Jan 1997 20:15:10 -0800

From: Rodger Morris <rodger@FISHNET.NET>  
Subject: Re: Cracked "Eagle" Egg  
To: Multiple recipients of list SCOUTS-L <SCOUTS-L@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU>

At 10:53 AM 1/9/97 -0500, Linda K. Clossen wrote:

>Dear Scouters,

>

>I have a Life Scout who is in trouble!

>He has been sitting at Life for 22 months.

>He is 15 years old.

>His parents are pushing him to Eagle.

...

>Mom and Dad say he has to finish the rank NOW or quit.

>I have discussed with both him and his parents the problem.

...

>As his SM, how can I help him to "Poop or get off the pot"? How can

>I direct him? What would you suggest??

>

>Yi S,

>Scoutmaster, Linda Clossen

>Troop 135

>

>

Linda,

I have a great Scout. He is 17 years old and has been a Star Scout for almost 3 1/2 years. He is one requirement away from completing each one of his three required citizenship merit badges. Completion of any one of these three merit badges will enable him to stand before a board of review for advancement to the rank of Life Scout. He will turn 18 on November 24th, and he is finally (!) saying he wants to press on to Eagle Scout. I have let him know that we adults will support him and that whether or not he becomes an Eagle Scout and the pace at which he does so is up to him.

I respectfully submit to you that the Eagle Scout award is not the end-all, be-all of the Boy Scouting program. As an example,



Scouting helped me tremendously, even though I topped out as a First Class Scout and dropped out of Scouting entirely at age 14.

In my experience over the past 25 years as a Scouter, most of my Scouts who remained in Scouting until they turned 18 did eventually become Eagle Scouts. About half of them finally turned their Eagle Scout applications in at the council service center during the last week preceding their 18<sup>th</sup> birthdays. One of those Scouts beat the deadline by turning in his paperwork 5 minutes before the council office closed for the day on the day before his 18th birthday. Then, he procrastinated and finally had his board of review 89 days after his 18th birthday.

I have also had Scouts who remained in my Troop until they turned 18 who chose not to become Eagle Scouts. One of them from the 1970s was Mark Nielson. He topped out at Second Class Scout. He was utterly uninterested in advancing to First Class Scout, but he knew his Scoutcraft skills very well indeed. One of the skills that he refused to allow himself to be tested on was lashings.

About 1975, he and three of my other Scouts (who were Second Class Scout, First Class Scout, Star Scout and Life Scout, respectively) saved a college student who had walked off a thirty foot cliff whilst hiking without a flashlight in the darkness. He was about 12 miles in from the trailhead.

One of the things Robert did was to use parachute cord to lash together a stretcher constructed by two of the other senior Scouts who used a Buck knife to cut down and trim some alder saplings. The parachute cord was brought by the fourth Scout who ran three miles back to camp to get it. The four of them had walked out of camp with fishing tackle to fish in a fishing hole near where they found the victim.

Sergeant Mortenson, the then-leader of the Ventura County Sheriff's Search and Rescue Team told me that these Scouts made "the best improvised stretcher that I have seen in the over 20 years that I have been in search and rescue."

My Scouts made a 15 mile forced march to the nearest ranger station, then guided the search and rescue team back to the campsite where the victim was being cared for by a church group. Then, they helped bring the wheeled Stokes litter out to the

trailhead. They finally arrived at their car about 4:30a.m., after having been on the trail for about 21 hours. (Non-Scouting backpacking/fishing trip by four friends who had been in Troop 225 for 5 years since crossing over from Webelos)

By the time they got there, they had put in over 40 miles that day (almost 50 miles for the runner, who was a member of his high school Junior Varsity cross country team). They were so tired, they decided to just drive home and get some sleep. Can't say I blame them..

The other three Scouts eventually became Eagle Scouts. Mark Nielson did not.

Did Scouting fail Mark Nielson because he did not become an Eagle Scout? I think not.

Should we have removed Mark from Scouting for failure to advance? Again, I think not.

Did Scouting provide Mark a place he needed to grow and mature. Yes, without a doubt, as he himself told me some years later.

Here are two facts concerning Eagle Scouts that may be of interest to you:

- 1) The median age of boys earning the Eagle Scout award is about 16 years
- 2) The median time between achieving Life Scout and Eagle Scout is slightly over two years

In my considered opinion, the parents of your Scout are dead wrong in demanding that your Scout advance immediately to Eagle or leave Scouting entirely. They are committing the classic and common error of confusing Scout advancement with the aims of Scouting.

Advancement is merely one of the eight methods we use in Scouting to achieve the three aims of Scouting. It's not even the most important method in Scouting, let alone the only one. The three aims are, of course, the development of good character, good citizenship, and what we call "personal fitness".

Collectively, these form the Scout's launching pad into a happy and productive adult life. Why are your Scout's parents so starkly intent upon destroying that launching pad and the Space Shuttle with it before it launches?

Yours in Scouting,

Rodger

Rodger Morris

Scoutmaster, Troop 852

Ventura County Council

Camarillo, California, USA

<rodger@fishnet.net>

Wood Badge 416-18

at Philmont, 1973

"I used to be a Beaver..."