

SCOUTS-L

**BOARDS OF
REVIEW**

Date: Fri, 28 Jul 1995 03:18:05 -0400 (EDT)
From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@CapAccess.org>
To: SCOUTS-L Youth Groups Discussion List <SCOUTS-L@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU>
Subject: Boards of Review

Scott Drown indicated that in his Troop the Board of Review was signing off requirements. This posting addresses that issue, provides the text of BSA's guidance on BORs and moves on to Jim Sleezer's query.

Scott, I would ask whether your SM and Committee Chair have been to training, sounds like it or a refresher is in order. The Board of Review has a specific place in the methods of Scouting, but it isn't to sign off Scouts on their requirements. I can't think of a more intimidating way to have to get a requirement passed than to have a formal board to pass. This is not what Scouting is about - it is about developing character, citizenship and fitness. The advancement program is a tool. We want it to motivate boys to grow not intimidate them. Please share the following taken directly from the 1992 Troop Committee Guidebook with your committee and BOR members:

BOARDS OF REVIEW (EXCEPT FOR EAGLE SCOUT)

"When a Scout has completed all of the requirements for a rank, he appears before a board of review composed of at least three and not more than six committee members.

"The review has three purposes:

- 1. To make sure that the work has been learned and completed.**
- 2. To find out what kind of experience the boy is having in his patrol and troop.**
- 3. To encourage the Scout to progress further.**

"The board of review is not a time to retest the Scout, but to determine the Scout's attitude and his acceptance of Scouting ideals. It is also important to review those Scouts who are not advancing. The guidance and care shown could motivate these Scouts to further achievement.

"The review should be conducted at a convenient time and location, such

as a troop meeting, summer camp, or the home of a member of the troop committee, Scoutmasters and assistant Scoutmasters do not participate in the board of review.

"The board of review members should feel free to refer to the Boy Scout Handbook, Scoutmaster Handbook, or any other references during the review.

"Because many boys are ill at ease when talking to adults, it is important that the board of review be held in a relaxed atmosphere. A certain amount of formality and meaningful questioning should be used during the review. Use questions that require a narrative answer.

"Examples of the kinds of questions that might be asked are:

- * What do you like most in troop outdoor activities?
- * What new things did you do/learn on your latest campout/service project/
troop meeting?
- * What did you learn/feel in giving service to others?
- * Why is being a Boy Scout important to you?
- * What are your goals in Scouting?
- * How will fulfilling requirement number _____ help you?

"These types of questions will help the boy to see the value and practical application of his efforts.

"At the conclusion of the review, the board should know whether a boy is qualified for the rank or palm. The Scout is asked to leave the room while the board members discuss his achievements. The decision of the board of review is arrived at through discussion and must be unanimous. If members are satisfied that the Scout is ready to advance, he is called in, congratulated, notified as to when he will receive his recognition, and encouraged to continue his advancement or earn the next palm.

"Scouts who are not advancing should also come before the board of review. The board should show interest in these Scouts' rank progress.

Ask the kind of questions that may reveal why they are not advancing:

- * Do you enjoy the outings/troop meetings?**
- * Which of the requirements are most difficult for you?**
- * Do you find that school activities are taking more of your time? Which ones?**

"Let the Scout know that he has the support of the board of review members and that there is no doubt that he can achieve the next rank. The board's concern and supportive manner will both help the Scout's confidence and impress upon him the importance of advancement in his Scouting experience.

"At the conclusion of every board of review, it is the the committee's responsibility to prepare and turn in to the local council office a copy of the Advancement Report, and ensure that the badges earned by the boys are obtained and awarded in a timely fashion."

There is a lot of good grist in the above for a Troop Board of Review. I think it makes it fairly clear that the board is not there to retest or test in the first instance. If the Scoutmaster has signed the requirement, it is signed and passed. The board does not then retest.

Now if the board learns that a requirement was never completed as in Jim's query, I think a lot depends on circumstances. As in Alan Houser's example, the SM may have decided that the boy learned the same things in the flag designing process as in making the flag. The SM has made a judgment call for which the boy should not be penalized. In such a case it would be appropriate for the committee and SM to reflect and evaluate that course of action for future consideration. We all learn from these things.

If on the other hand the SM signed off on the requirement and no work was done, the board could vote that the requirement was not met and that the Scout is not yet ready. There isn't any guidance in the book on that one, because boards aren't there to be in the business of failing scouts. But when it happens, I like the suggestion of counseling instead of a pronouncement of failure. Reason: the Scout lived up to the Scout Law and demonstrated his trustworthiness by being honest. Let's encourage

this by asking further questions about what he thinks should be done about the obvious problem. Encourage him that he has completed all of the other requirements and is ready to advance and ask what help is needed? Give the Scout ownership of the solution through guided discussion. Most Scouts will decide that their honor requires them to go back and work on it a little more and they'll be the prouder when they do wear the badge later. This is an area where the board needs to really be aware of its purpose and ask plenty of questions to make sure the Scout is getting the program - delivering the promise! Here a board that is familiar with the situation is best placed to really answer the question. In some cases it may be appropriate to grant the rank, in others to counsel. The key is to keep the Scout motivated to continue to participate in the program and work towards the basic goals of scouting - character, citizenship and fitness.

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

Date: Sat, 29 Jul 1995 03:12:39 -0400 (EDT)
From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@CapAccess.org>
To: SCOUTS-L Youth Groups Discussion List <SCOUTS-L@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU>
Subject: More on Boards of Review, Purpose, Eagles

The recent postings on Boards of Review, Purpose and Eagles indicates to me that the members of this list are a wonderful group of fine Scouters who are doing their best to see that each Scout they come into contact with is getting the best Scouting program that they can offer. And the healthy interest and exchange of ideas that we have seen only confirms that opinion. We all are always learning in this Scouting business and the testing of ideas and sharing of concerns helps us all.

Sometimes the sharing can become somewhat spirited! :-) And Scott is right that he hit a nerve with me. My concern was with the Scouts and a desire to see that they were being the best program possible. Hence a long posting on the orientation of BORs towards being more in the business of evaluating the quality of the program offered to the Scouts than acting as a retester of requirements and related comments about failing.

I for one would rather not see the word "failure" associated with Scouting because of its negative connotations for the individual and

the implied danger that a leader might be discouraging rather than encouraging a Scout to his full potential. In trying to address this, I suggested two alternatives for a board; e.g., pass or counsel the Scout through guided discussion into a realization of the additional effort necessary to meet the requirements, giving encouragement for what has been done and his honesty before the board. This was not meant to say that a BOR can't find that a Scout has not met the requirements. Far from it. What was meant was that the BOR should be looking not to brand the Scout as a failure, but ways to help him be motivated and to succeed. Yep. Definitely a nerve for me. :-)

Part of learning is also keeping up to date with changes that can have an affect on Scouts. As Bruce indicated, the rules for a BOR have changed and the membership now must be adult committee members.

Likewise a BOR is required for each rank starting with Tenderfoot. For a Scout, it will help avert potential problems later with an Eagle BOR, if the Scout has been through all of his rank BORs and their membership was properly constituted. For example, consider what would happen if an evaluating Eagle BOR member's questions elicited a comment from the Scout that indicated a lack of previous BORs or ones conducted by Scouts. Technically, he would not have completed a requirement for a previous rank. Most likely this would result in a delay while the problem was rectified and a good deal of anxiety on the part of the Scout, parents, leaders, etc.

All of this discussion eventually gets back to the fact that BORs are a part of one of the methods of Scouting - Advancement and that their execution should always be in furtherance of Scouting's purposes or aims:

1. To build character
2. To foster citizenship
3. To develop fitness

These are all positive directions and hence the emphasis on encouragement and motivation in BOR settings.

Similarly, while we can debate the merits of a particular badge or set of requirements for use in advancement, it is useful to remember that advancement, outdoors program, uniforms, etc. are methods towards the three aims and that they are not ends in themselves. It is for that reason that some aspects of these methods have changed with time to help

our Scouts prepare for new challenges.

Sure, those of us who were Scouts as youths can recall back to how hard or easy a particular rank or badge was way back when and try to decided whether it was easier or not. We may or not agree with all of the changes, but I think the key thing is to look at what it means to the Scout today. Is he being challenged, motivated and as a result growing in citizenship, character, and fitness? Are the methods we are using resulting in the Scouts improving in these areas? And as they approach Eagle, are they being similarly challenged, though some of the merit badges are different?

In answering these questions for myself, I tend to look at what it was like for me as a Scout reaching Eagle in 1967 and my son's progress toward Eagle now. He is 14 and probably won't be an Eagle until he's 15, although he has earned Life and has 22 merit badges so far. In completing the requirements of some of those badges he has learned many things I didn't learn until much later in life. Some of the requirements are different and some of the learning areas are different, but as I watch, I'm amazed at how hard he has worked at it and his self-motivation (in my case the motivation was external - mother on my back constantly). For him the Scouting program is delivering a lot more than what I had including a healthy dose of self-motivation. And as he prepares for his Eagle project he'll be learning a lot more about leadership than I did when I simply performed services under the requirements extant nearly 30 years ago. For him as a Scout I think that the Eagle rank will have every bit as much importance and value as it did for me, if not more. From this perspective it is hard for me to try to compare which time period's requirement were harder, better, etc., because I can see in my own son and other Scouts here tremendous growth on the Eagle trail.

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

Date: Sat, 29 Jul 1995 08:56:59 -0500 (CDT)
From: "Greg L. Gough" <ggough@mail.orion.org>
To: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@CAPACCESS.ORG>
Subject: Re: More on Boards of Review, Purpose, Eagles

Mike,

Here are a few items I composed that you might be able to use at some point. Thanks again for some great informational posts. I am going to print your posts and give them to all Committee members so they will be prepared to conduct future BOR's. We were very similar already but it never hurts to refresh one's memory.

YiS

Greg Gough
SM Troop 201
Ozark, MO

I used to be an Owl but
I will always be an Eagle!

Date: Sat, 29 Jul 1995 09:27:42 -0800
From: Scott Drown <scottdd@HALCYON.COM>
Subject: Re: More on Boards of Review, Purpose, Eagles

Mike Bowman said:

>The recent postings on Boards of Review, Purpose and Eagles indicates to
>me that the members of this list are a wonderful group of fine Scouters
>who are doing their best to see that each Scout they come into contact
>with is getting the best Scouting program that they can offer. And the
>healthy interest and exchange of ideas that we have seen only confirms
>that opinion. We all are always learning in this Scouting business and
>the testing of ideas and sharing of concerns helps us all.

snip

Isn't it the truth. I certainly agree with Mike's points and what he sees as the purpose of the Board as yet another portion of the program to support and assist the Scouts to learn and grow.

My own son made Eagle at thirteen (I thought this a bit to early), grew a lot in the proces, and continues to grow three years later in the Troop and other Scout activities.

Scott Drown
ASM Troop 39
Mt Baker Council, Wa

Date: Sat, 29 Jul 1995 13:27:28 -0700 (PDT)
From: "Timothy J O'Leary" <tjo@cptchr.afip.mil>

**To: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@CAPACCESS.ORG>
Subject: Re: More on Boards of Review, Purpose, Eagles**

You are a good man, Michael Bowman. I hope to meet you sometime.

**Tim O'Leary
tjo@afip.mil**

On Sat, 29 Jul 1995, Michael F. Bowman wrote:

**> The recent postings on Boards of Review, Purpose and Eagles indicates to
> me that the members of this list are a wonderful group of fine Scouters
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>

Date: Mon, 31 Jul 1995 08:24:13 -0500

To: mfbowman@capaccess.org

From: rwromig@ppco.com (ralph romig)

Subject: Re: More on Boards of Review, Purpose, Eagles

**>In answering these questions for myself, I tend to look at what it was
>like for me as a Scout reaching Eagle in 1967 and my son's progress
>toward Eagle now. He is 14 and probably won't be an Eagle until he's
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>than what I had including a healthy dose of self-motivation. And as he
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>it did for me, if not more. From this perspective it is hard for me to
>try to compare which time period's requirement were harder, better, etc.,
>because I can see in my own son and other Scouts here tremendous
growth**

>on the Eagle trail.

I wish him the very best as he continues his way to Eagle. Thanks for sharing that with the list Michael.

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**From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@CapAccess.org>
To: SCOUTS-L Youth Groups Discussion List <SCOUTS-L@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU>
Subject: BOR - Dated Resource Material**

Bob,

The Mike you addressed your posting to must have a Troop Committee Guidebook that predates the 1990 printing. I took a look at the 1991 printing, the 1992 printing, and the 1995 printing and none include a reference to questions regarding pitching a tent, etc. The all have in this statement "The board of review is **NOT A TIME TO RETEST THE SCOUT, . . ." (Caps = boldface in original text). A lot of Troop libraries accumulate material that needs to be weeded out from time to time as changes come about. Maybe this is a situation where the Troop Librarian should be passing some of the books over to the Troop Historian. <g>**

**Speaking only for myself in the Scouting Spirit, Michael F. Bowman
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mfbowman@CAPACCESS.ORG**

**From mfbowman@CapAccess.org Sat Sep 23 00:05:56 1995
To: Kim Hannemann 80167 <KHANNEMANN@worldbank.org>
Subject: Re: Registered Adults on Boards of Review**

Kim,

Glad to be of small help. If your are in the course I think you are in with Al Bornmann as SPL, then John Tew should be in your Beaver Patrol. If so, you should already be in possession of a small white token with a beaver on it. <g> John and I both work for the Navy. Say hi for me.

**Speaking only for myself in the Scouting Spirit, Michael F. Bowman
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mfbowman@CAPACCESS.ORG**

**Date: Sun, 1 Oct 1995 20:52:10 -0400
From: "James A. Sheckels" <JASHECKELS@AOL.COM>
Subject: Adult Registration**

I have read with interest the mail over the last two weeks concerning adult registration, especially that of the Committee. This response is rather lengthy, just so I make my ramblings clear. First let me say that all adults working in official capacity with any Scout unit should be registered in support of the Youth Protection program - a big part of the YPT is proper registration and approval of same. Watch the film again if you don't see this in the YPT.

Now I go to the Rules and Regulations of the BSA pamphlet (emphasis is mine).

Article VI (Local Councils) Section 3 (Local Units) has several clauses which apply:

Clause 8 (Unit Committees) paraphrased, each chartered unit shall be under

supervision of a unit committee consisting of three or more qualified adults,

21 years or older, selected by the chartered organization (or community group

if chartered org is a community), one of whom will be chairman.

Clause 10c (Packs), Clause 11c (Troops), Clause 12c (Teams) each state that "the active adult leadership shall be designated collectively as Cub

Scouters/Scouters/Varsity Scouter and individually as pack/troop/team COMMITTEE MEMBERS, (each clause then lists the titles of each leader

position). They shall be appointed and COMMISSIONED as outlined in the Bylaws and these Rules and Regulations. These Cub

Scouters/Scouters/Varsity

Scouters shall be required to meet the same MEMBERSHIP requirements and

leadership responsibilities and shall have the same privileges and opportunities as provided for all unit Scouters."

Article VIII, Adult Leadership

Section I, Clause 2. "Unit Scouters. All adult members REGISTERED with the unit, except the COR who shall be considered a council Scouter". (Yep, that

means the COR is a silver tab wearer, not red/blue, etc!)

Section I, Clause 5 (Approval) "All recommendations for COMMISSIONS or certificates of membership for unit, district and council Scouters ... are subject to the approval of the local council....Said recommendations for unit Scouters must be approved by the head of the chartered organization or COR."

(This is why the adult application has all those signature lines on it.)

Section 3 (Commissioned Leadership) Clause 1 (Issuance of COMMISSIONS)

"All

individuals in unit leadership positions...shall be issued commissions by the BSA".

Article XI (Business....Registration)

Section 3 (Registration) Clause 10 (Procedure for Registration) "All applications shall be submitted on official forms prepared for that purpose...".

Section 3 Clause 11 "The Corporation shall issue to each approved registrant

a suitable certificate of membership or commission designating the applicant's official relationship to the BSA". (Your membership card)

As a recap - Unit committee members are COMMISSIONED leaders (not Commissioners, who are also commissioned). To be commissioned, you must be

approved by the Council and the Charteres Organization. To be approved, you

must complete and submit the adult application, and all required signatures

must be on it. Along with this goes the annual registration fee. Therefore, to be a member of any Unit Committee, you must be registered. Or is my interpreter out of order??

Thank you for reading my latest novel ;-),
YIS, Jim Sheckels I use to be a Bobwhite....

Date: Thu, 12 Oct 1995 04:05:30 -0400 (EDT)

From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@CapAccess.org>

Subject: Re: Board of Review Frequency

Each Troop should try its best to have a Board of Review opportunity once a month. Three months may be easy on the adults, but is rough on Scouts. The idea is to give them the opportunity to advance at their own pace and as quickly as they desire. In Cub Scouts you learned that immediate recognition was important and that long delays resulted in Cubs getting

awards they had forgotten they earned and couldn't remember the connection. Boy Scouts are a little better, but what we are trying to do is encourage and reinforce the achievements they are making in their own personal growth and we need to do so fairly close to the time they have completed their work. This will best reinforce the effort. Recognition delayed is often recognition denied. In each Troop the committee should be meeting monthly. Why not have an extra half-hour built in for a BOR?

We should be doing our best to make this part of the advancement process as easy as we can. Likewise we should be using BORs as part of the monitoring process to keep tabs on the health of the unit. Yes, BORs can be held to learn why a Scout is not advancing. This is one of the things that adult leaders seldom do, but need to consider.

The idea that a Scout needs a week to prepare for a BOR is troubling to me. Why is this? In the old days when a BOR was often used to retest the Scout, maybe this was so, but now? Take a look at the Troop Committee Guidebook section on BORs and you will find the following:

"The review has three purposes:

1. To make sure that the work has been learned and completed.
2. To find out what kind of experience the boy is having in his patrol and troop.
3. To encourage the Scout to progress further.

"The board of review is not a time to retest the Scout, but to determine the Scout's attitude and his acceptance of Scouting ideals. It is also important to review those Scouts who are not advancing. The guidance and care shown could motivate these Scouts to further achievement.

"The review should be conducted at a convenient time and location, such as a troop meeting, summer camp, or the home of a member of the troop committee, Scoutmasters and assistant Scoutmasters do not participate in the board of review.

"The board of review members should feel free to refer to the Boy Scout Handbook, Scoutmaster Handbook, or any other references during the review.

"Because many boys are ill at ease when talking to adults, it is important that the board of review be held in a relaxed atmosphere. A certain amount of formality and meaningful questioning should be used during the review. Use questions that require a narrative answer."

Hold Boards of Review as often as you can with the goal of trying to do it once a month. This will help your committee as much as the Scouts. The committee will be better able to assess whether the Scouts are getting a good program and if not can act before things get to far along. This is difficult if BORs are only quarterly. Likewise the Scouts will have the benefit of immediate reinforcement of their achievements and will grow in the self-esteem that leads to further motivation and advancement.

**Speaking only for myself in the Scouting Spirit, Michael F. Bowman
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mfbowman@CAPACCESS.ORG**

**Date: Thu, 6 Jun 1996 21:15:07 -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: More on BOR**

Kevin,

When you are starting up with a small Troop, one of the best ways to get Boards of Review started is to borrow Scouters from other units and register them as committee members. If I recall correctly the fee for this dual registration is only \$1.00. They will understand that it is necessary to be registered with the unit and that their role will be to do the BORs. This will allow you to move advancement along and avoid any questions later challenging whether a rank was properly awarded. Twenty years ago I wouldn't have bothered with the dual registration and would have just focused on getting help from the Scouter. Sadly these days we seem to have a few to many that focus on "technical" details instead of advancement as a method towards the goals of Scouting. To prevent one of these sorts from embarrassing a Scout later on, it is just easier to do the registration.

**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: Sun, 9 Jun 1996 02:02:00 -0400 (EDT)
From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@CapAccess.org>
To: "Bruce E. Cobern" <bec@nyc.pipeline.com>
Subject: Re: More on BOR**

Bruce,

If you were referring to Signe's list of attorney questions and answers, I have in fact used each and everyone of those questions in a training session with new litigation attorneys in our office as examples of exactly what not to do in a deposition or witness examination on the stand. Generally I try to avoid such questions. :-) I could tell more war stories about really dumb questions, believe me. :-))) My favorite was an attorney that was questioning a the only witness to a vicious dog attack. He succeeded in proving that the witness was nearly deaf, forgetful, legally blind, etc. He could have stopped and the jury probably would have discounted the witness, but no he couldn't resist and had to ask one more question. So the attorney fires off with "Well Mr. Jones, you've said you are legally blind and nearly deaf, how do you expect the jury to believe that you were able to identify the defendant's dog as the one that bit the plaintiff?" The old man smiled as the signing interpreter relayed the question and said, "Well sonny, it wasn't too hard to figure out. When I pulled the dog off Mrs. Smith, the damned thing bit me in the ass and was still there when the police arrived." Guess the attorney should have done his homework. :-)

As to risk, you are probably in the majority. Most people won't have the problem I described, but I did. That is why I am a bit sensitive. I ran into an awkward situation where a UC had a son in a troop who got approval for an Eagle project very similar to one planned by another Scout in the same troop that had his project rejected. The mother thought that the UC had pulled some strings with "District Buddies" and went ballistic. The mother then challenged every step of the UC's son's advancement including the composition of the BORs. I know of another Scouter in another Council who got into a situation where another parent wrote to National to challenge an Eagle Scout's previous ranks with allegations of improper BORs. Fortunately this sort of thing doesn't

happen very often, but the fact that it has at all is what got me exercised.

**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: Tue, 13 Aug 1996 07:20:56 -0500
From: "Greg L. Gough" <ggough@MAIL.ORION.ORG>
Subject: Re: Board of review**

Tom,

The Scoutmaster's Conference is not a time to retest the scout. This conference is specifically designed to "develope over a period of time an increasing level of understanding and trust between the Scoutmaster and each scout." The BOR is to "make sure he has met all requirements for the rank..." The BOR is not to retest the scout. So, when is the scout tested? When the requirement is signed off. The BOR is a checks and balance system so you can react to situations that have allowed a scout to advance without fully knowing the material. The best way to get a scout up to speed on basic skills is have him teach the skill to some younger scouts. He will need to be prepared, brush up on his skills and will need some supervision. When he is done you should give hime praise for a good job or encouragement to continue brushing up.

Greg Gough

SM Troop 201, Ozark, MO. I used to be an Owl but I will always be an Eagle!

**Date: Wed, 14 Aug 1996 06:00:58 EDT
From: Gary Sherwin <sherwin@SUNSHINE.PGH.WEC.COM>
Subject: Scoutmasters Conference & Board of Review**

Fellow Scouters:

Most of the things we do, or have the boys do, in scouting have multiple motives. Boys join Scouts to have fun. They join for the activities. Ask the man or woman on the street, "What is the purpose of Scouting?" They will usualy answer, "To go camping and learn about the outdoors." !!!-WRONG-!!! These are tools to meet an end. They are not the purpose.

The purpose of A Scoutmasters Conference is not to test a boys skills.

It is to make sure that he has been signed off on all of the requirements for a rank. It is to systematically develop a closer relationship between the scout and scoutmaster, by giving a series of age and skill separated times when they can talk seriously about their experiences, successes, strengths, weaknesses, plans, goals..... It is a tool that also provides the boy with experience talking to a person of authority, Just like they will soon do in a job interview with a prospective employer. For younger scouts, it is also a time for explaining the purpose of the SMC and BOR.

The purpose of the Board of Review is to **EVALUATE THE TROOP PROGRAM.** Scouts and BOR members should be aware of this. When we have Scoutmaster

Conferences in our troop, (I say we, because I do not do my own sons final Scoutmaster Conference) I explain and remind them of this every time. They know that they may be asked questions that are related to the requirements, but they know that If they do not know how they passed

the test, they will just help improve the program for the next scout, because if they do not know, and the next guy does not know etc... then I get called in to be told of the troops deficiencies in instructing scouts in scouting skills and I will relay this to the Patrol Leaders Council at its next meeting and to the SPL and Instructors and Guides, to encourage them to become beter at their jobs.

The Board of Review is also a time for the scout to bring to light problems with the troop such as abusive situations, without having to do so in front of an opposing authority figure that he is already having a problem with.

And finaly, the BOR is also a group "Job Interview" practice session. This is an invaluable oportunity for the boy to polish up on his "Impress them" skills"

Yours in Scouting. Yours in Service. - Home - (412) 722-3476 -
I used to be an Eagle--Wood Badge NE-V-19-20 - Work - 256-
2563 -
Eagle Scout Class of 1967 Westmoreland Fayette Cncl - FAX - 1412 -
(Mr.) Gary W. Sherwin SM - Wagion Lodge #6 Vigil -
BSA Troop 461, Box 342, Yukon, Pa. 15698
sherwin@sunshine.pgh.wec.com

Date: Sun, 18 Aug 1996 01:23:40 -0400 (EDT)
From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@CapAccess.org>
To: SCOUTS-L - Youth Groups Discussion List <SCOUTS-L@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU>
Subject: Re: Board of review (Knots)

Jason,

I think your committee misunderstands how a Board of Review should be conducted. Asking a Scout to "demonstrate" a skill is retesting. It is much better to ask a Scout to talk about what he learned and how he will apply it in life so that you can measure the quality of your program. We also need to keep in mind that advancement and requirements are not ends in themselves, merely methods to get at the goals of Scouting - citizenship, character development, and fitness. If your the requirements were signed off and the Scout was passed through the SM conference there is no need to ask for a demonstration of skills. That part of the process is over. The committee needs to focus on their real task of reviewing with the Scout what he has learned, how he will apply it, what he plans to do to progress further, etc., while measuring the effectiveness of the Troop's program. If they are worried that the Scout has grown rusty on a skill, then they can chat with the SM, who in turn can coach the Scout through a teaching exercise with younger Scouts where the opportunity to relearn the skill can be married to a leadership development and without putting the Scout in a spot where he might believe that his rank was in the balance - he may well figure, assuranes to the contrary, that the BOR wouldn't ask for the demonstration, if it didn't have an effect on whether he would pass. Remember that this is a game with a purpose and that tribunals are not a part of the game.

Speaking only for myself in the Scouting Spirit, Michael F. Bowman
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Date: Sat, 24 Aug 1996 22:35:59 -0400 (EDT)
From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@CapAccess.org>
To: SCOUTS-L - Youth Groups Discussion List <SCOUTS-L@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU>
Subject: Purposes of Board of Review

Hugh,

You stated,

- > The book also says an objective of the Board is "to make sure that the Scout**
- > has done what he was supposed to do for the rank". Everyone please note that**
- > "Scout" is used; it does not say that the result is used to evaluate the**
- > troop, counselor, council, summer camp, or program - that is an**
- > interpretation which, although valid, is only partial.**

The Troop Committee Guidebook says:

"The review has three purposes:

- 1. To make sure that the work has been learned and completed.**
- 2. To find out what kind of experience the boy is having in his patrol and troop.**
- 3. To encourage the Scout to progress further.**

The board of review is not a time to retest the Scout, but to determine the Scout's attitude and his acceptance of Scouting ideals. It is also important to review those Scouts who are not advancing. The guidance and care shown could motivate these Scouts to further achievement."

While you may believe that the only way to determine whether a Scout has learned and completed the work is to test skills regardless of how you label it, this is clearly not the intent of what a Board of Review is all about. And you will note that the purposes do include references to "Patrol" and "Troop."

Now how can you be assured that a Scout really knows his stuff, if you can't retest at a BOR? What that means is a lot more work on the part of leaders. It means that we have to really coach the PLC to teach the skills properly in the first place and trust that when a Scout is signed off, he has really completed the skill. If not, then the adults who are watching, need to do some on the spot counseling right then and there with the Scout who signed off, not the one one who did his best.

Afterward the Scout can be counseled to give it another shot to improve or involved in games, teaching and other opportunities to relearn and sharpen the skill painlessly. Finally, the Scoutmaster at the SM Conference should be the final check to review skill achievement. The BOR members are there to see that the Scout has met with the SM, that the requirements are signed off and to ask general open ended questions that will help them learn what the Scout has done and where he is headed. They also will learn about where the Troop can improve. Finally they should be encouraging the youth the progress further.

If the only way they can be sure that a Scout has completed a requirement is to retest they are making it clear that the Troop's leadership is a failure and not to be trusted. Likewise, they are imposing new retest requirements that are beyond those authorized by BSA. And while many boys will make it through and even learn from retesting, that doesn't necessarily make it right.

Finally, we need to remember that the goals of Scouting (BSA) are threefold - citizenship, character, and fitness. The advancement program is a method of achieving these goals and not an end in itself. That is why the BOR is focused more on how the boy is doing, what his plans are, how he is applying lessons from Scouting in life. A BOR is supposed to be looking at the big picture regarding the Scout's development.

A personal concern that I have is when Scouter's persist in using their own methods despite fairly clear guidance from BSA on what is expected. I don't mean to direct this at you personally, but in the past I've witnessed unit where leaders went beyond reasonable and turned BORs into tribunals that became so frightening that Scouts were afraid to attend, got sick in order to avoid, or just quit. We have a standard developed that promotes the purposes of Scouting and limits the role of BORs and hence the opportunity for misuse. Remember that Scouting is a game with a purpose. :-) From a slightly younger Eagle ('67):

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Date: Mon, 28 Oct 1996 17:39:33 PST
From: "Fred N. Rogers" <fredrogers@JUNO.COM>
Subject: Re: Who can sit on Board of Review....?
To: Multiple recipients of list SCOUTS-L <SCOUTS-L@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU>

The following is quoted from "Advancement Policies and Procedures Committee Guide," 1994 Edition, page 16:

"After a Scout has completed all requirements for Tenderfoot, Second Class, First Class, Star, and Life ranks, or an Eagle Palm, he appears before a board of review. This board of review is made up of at least three and not more than six members of the troop committee. One member serves as chairman, usually the committee member responsible for advancement. **<bold on>Unit leaders, assistant unit leaders, relatives, or guardians may not serve as members of a Scout's board of review.<bold off>**"

The following is quoted from page 17 of the same source:

"The Boys Scouts of America has placed the Eagle Scout board of review in the hands of either the troop, team, post, or ship committee or the district or council committee responsible for advancement. The council will decide and promulgate which method or methods may be used.

"The board of review for an Eagle candidate is composed of a minimum of three members and a maximum of six members. These members do not have to be registered in Scouting, but they must have an understanding of the importance and purpose of the Eagle board of review. At least one district or council advancement representative shall be a member of the Eagle board of review, when conducted at the unit level and may serve as chairman if so requested by the unit."

Some troop committee members wear uniforms. The wearing of the uniform has nothing to do with who can sit on a board of review. I think the intent behind the statement is that SM and ASM are not allowed to sit on a board of review. The reason for this is that one of the purposes of the board of review is to review the troop's advancement program. Using the committee gives more of an independent point of view.

Fred Rogers
Tioga District Advancement Chairman
Baden-Powell Council

On Sun, 27 Oct 1996 19:49:10 -0700 CzarCasm <stanleyb@CRL.COM> writes:
>For a long time I have marveled over the good nature of my son's troop

>insofar howwell all the parents got along... very very little
>politics...
>
>well, that ended tonight in a dispute ove who could site on a Board of
>Review...
>
>so I am asking... with possibly a reference to a publication.... who
>can
>officially sit on a BoR....
>
>Part of the questions deals with the fact that the more knowledgeable
>folks say that NO uniformed person can sit on one.. now we have a
>number of fathers... such as the guy who is our recruiter.... wear a
>uniform, but never ever acts in any Scout Master capacity....
>
>your input is greatly appreacted..
>
>stan rudnick
>
Date: Thu, 30 Jan 1997 17:49:55 -0500
Reply-To: Andrew Hagemann <hagemann@VISI.NET>
Sender: Scouts-L Youth Group List <Scouts-L@tcu.edu>
To: Multiple recipients of list SCOUTS-L <SCOUTS-L@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU>

Charles,

Ask questions that help you discover the young man's character. Ask him things like (thanks to Messrs Clarence Terry and Denny Barnhardt for many of these questions):

- + National is considering eliminating one of the Scout Laws. Which one would you drop, and why?
- + National has decided to add another point to the Scout Law. What point would you add, and why?
- + Why did you become a Boy Scout?
- + Why did you stay in Scouting?
- + What do you say to your peers at school who tell you that they think that Boy Scouting isn't "cool"?
- + What did you learn in your first (current) Troop job?
- + What kind of leader are you?

- + **What kind of follower are you?**
- + **Do you know which of these two can be delegated and which one can not: responsibility and authority? Defend your answer.**
- + **What do you think is the most important quality a Patrol Leader (Senior PL) should have?**
- + **What do you think you do to display Scout Spirit outside of the Troop meeting?**
- + **What do you think is the main attraction of your Troop?**
- + **How could you make your Troop better?**
- + **What do you think Eagle Scouts should do after they become an Eagle?**
- + **What new skills have you learned in Scouting that will help you in the adult world (or in your future career)?**
- + **Why do you come to Troop meetings?**
- + **What do you think is the hardest thing for a new Scout to learn about the Patrol method?**
- + **What kind of question would you ask if you were a member of the BOR sitting for your present rank?**

I think you get the drift.

**YiS,
Drew**

- > **I have just been ask to be a member of my**
- > **Eagle BOR. Can the group help me with what**
- > **I should be asking during this very important**
- > **meeting? I have been involved with other**
- > **BOR but this is my first Eagle.**
- >

--

**Andrew Hagemann <hagemann@visi.net>
SA, Troop 6
Colonial Virginia Council**

**A "Charging" Buffalo, SR-158
Jamboree '97 Metal Work MB Booth Coordinator**

**Date: Fri, 7 Mar 1997 12:14:50 -0500
From: "H. Alan Schup" <aschup@WHY.NET>
Subject: BoR "Review" Policy
To: Multiple recipients of list SCOUTS-L <SCOUTS-L@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU>**

This is my very last post on this subject. National BSA Policy is very clear. Sometimes I think my EMAIL to SCOUTS-L is not being posted from all the non-BSA "not-gonna-do-it. don't-wanna-change" arguments I see. Sure, there is no "Scouting Police", but one day an angry mom is going to call the council office and your Committee Chairman and Scoutmaster will get a call from the DE and commissioner. Policy is policy. Get over it and get with the program. Have you considered that you may cost a young man his Eagle Rank because something the Troop Committee has done differently than policy may bounce the Eagle Scout Rank Application by the national Eagle Scout Service screening?

The four steps to Boy Scout Advancement are:

THE BOY SCOUT LEARNS: A Scout learns by doing...

THE BOY SCOUT IS TESTED: A Scout may be tested on rank requirements by PL, SM, ASM, CM, or a member of his troop.

THE BOY IS REVIEWED: After a Scout has completed all requirements for a rank, he has a review of his progress by a group of 3 to 6 committee members called a Board of Review. The board of review is not be a examination or retest, but instead is a review of personal growth from the Scouting program.

THE BOY SCOUT IS RECOGNIZED: ...recognition ceremony at a troop meeting as soon as possible with the formal presentation of the rank certificate at a Court of Honor.

For those having the trouble with the BoR policy quote, "To make sure that

the work has been learned and completed", the policy is spelled out very clear in the same paragraph explaining this: "The review is not an examination. The Scout has learned his skill and has been examined. This is a REVIEW. The Scout should be asked where he learned his skill, who taught him, and the value he gained from passing the requirement."

It is very clear from National BSA policy that the word REVIEW in Board of Review does not mean retest or examination. It is clear to me that the intent of the BoR is to see that the Scout understands the "Big Picture" of the value of the skills in total and is not focused on the physical testing of each individual requirement as an end product upon itself (something that the school counselor should be doing for school). [I even do this as SM. One example- learning knots is drugery unless the end product is to be able to use the knots to build a monkey bridge or go climbing/rapelling.]

I will now take off my ADC hat and put back on the SM hat. I did not realize until now that BoR is a hobbyhorse for some of us. <grin> Everyone Take Care,
-Alan Schup

Date: Tue, 19 Nov 1996 10:33:23 -0500
From: "Thomas C. Stoddard" <tom.stoddard@octopus.pgh.wec.com>
Subject: (4 topics)Long - Advancement Process Added C
To: Multiple recipients of list SCOUTS-L <SCOUTS-L@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU>

We all enjoy the posts from Maj. Walton, and his most recent few have not disappointed. I have been a lurker on the list lately, enjoying what everyone has said, feeling all the responses to requests have been good, concise and complete - that I did not have anything further to add. Mike's latest posts have prompted a couple rejoinders, mostly in agreement with his observations; and a sharing of experience.

Topic #1:

The original question was regarding
>Inability of a Board to question weaknesses in passing merit badges,
>counselors. weak projects, weak leadership, poor spirit - anything behind
>the application

The advancement guidelines offer several gyrations as to the composition of the

Eagle Board of Review (held on district level, held at troop site, held with troop committee with a district representative, held with all district committee representatives, etc.) The one we have used, and I feel works best (Your mileage may vary) is a board composed of equal numbers from the District advancement committee and troop committee (I ask for three from each, which then fits the "three to six" standard noted in the guidelines). If the Committee is to be vested with the responsibility of setting policy and direction for the troop, they need to be regarded courteously and given responsibility in that role.

We will often take that time, District Committee to Troop Committee to counsel with them, to consider the operation of the troop, answer questions and share ideas we've seen work in other units, review procedure that should be followed, etc. The Eagle Candidate is an ideal exhibit to launch from, he represents the troop's "product" and though the decision on the candidate is independent, *after the review*, and the candidate has stepped out of the room and the board is polling its members to obtain approval (a unanimous vote being required for approval), there is a moment there to *evaluate* (as Mike says) with the troop committee that I find very effective.

I have not been shy to suggest, and have offered at various times, all of the following,

- "Though I can see no reason on paper or performance to deny this scout the Eagle Award, I do want to let you know candidly as a troop committee that this is a very weak application. Here are some ideas you can take back to the unit to strengthen your process...."**
- Another time, "It is obvious from the responses of this Eagle Candidate that**

your troop is not using the patrol method, or is being run by all the adults. Would you as a troop committee please take Bill (the scoutmaster) by the hand,

lead him to the back of the room and plant his fanny in a chair? This Eagle Candidate is capable of running your troop, and is not being given a chance."

- "I realize there is nothing in the guidelines which prevent a parent from being a merit badge counselor, but did you realize as I review blue cards that fully 12 of this candidate's 21 merit badges were signed off by Mom, Dad

Aunt Betty? How do you feel about Adult Role Model as a method of scouting,

and what do you think your troop can do by way of policy or practice to encourage that growth experience of a boy picking up the phone and going to

meet an adult with some expertise in the field?"

- "Did you hear what the scout said when I asked him about his merit badges?

As a troop committee, you need to be concerned when he says 'I got it just because the counselor came to our troop meeting'. That raises red flags in my mind that he's not being taken thoroughly through the requirements.

Here,

let me give you a pamphlet (the BSA publication on Merit Badge Counseling) and

note this paragraph on "how many at a time?" Just because he's sitting in troop meeting does not mean he has any proficiency in a merit badge. I'd suggest you continue to have troop program on these topics, that's super. But leave all "passing off" of requirements to an individual meeting with the

counselor at another place in the church, or in an individual appointment at

his home (with a buddy sitting across the way). Don't let your troop become

perceived as an 'Eagle Scout Factory'."

Many committee people are parents or parishoners who want to support scouting,

but all the training they see initially is "the way the troop has been operating". We have had some real eye-openers as we've taken the moment, and it

really is just a few minutes there as we need to get back to the Eagle Candidate, to explain some nuance, or standard, or what we are really looking

for in the Eagle Project. It has made a big difference. The counsel has universally been well-received, and I delight in having the troop committee members throughout the district call me and ask me questions on individual cases (not the scoutmasters anymore!) as I see them going back to the unit with these comments, and their desire to take hold and step up the troop's "product".

On the project, Mike suggests a contact with the benefitting organization to evaluate its merit and execution. I second that idea. We have done this. By suggesting to the troop committees that a letter or note of completion would be sufficient for me, this has (over a couple of years) become a general practice.

And I just have them clip/staple it to their packet. One project a boy performed was in benefit of a local "no-kill" animal shelter. The administrator wrote such a cute completion letter in the voice of the animals. "Hi, I'm Sam, and I'm a blood hound, and this is my pal, Max. He's siamese. And we wanted to write to let you know how much we and all our friends appreciate the service of Troop 85 and Eagle Scout candidate David Edwards.....(with photos and a 'paw print' signature)" I'm a softy, I guess, but I still thrill to read it.

The "cooling down" period Mike suggests wherein we evaluate program and achievements has a term in the training literature, we call it "Reflection." I agree with Mike on its use, I wholeheartedly endorse it. And, yes, this practice should be part of the board of review. (Again, with the members of the committee present, it is valuable for them to hear their Eagle Scout candidates when I ask questions like, "What experience in scouting did you have when you felt, Awright!! I can do this, and really sensed you had your stuff together? Was there ever a time when you were ready to just chuck it all in and leave the troop, why? In what ways did you feel you were looking for something from

scouting which your troop had a difficulty in delivering? If you could change something about your troop or your scouting experience, what would it be?")

Topic #2:

>After almost 25 years we will

>have a Lone Scout Eagle candidate in the near future;

Last week we held a board of review for a Lone Scout. My first one as well. It was only partially such a condition. He was in a troop, left for Pakistan with Father's work assignment for awhile. Then the last year has been back in a

troop. It was a super Board of Review. His father had served as a scoutmaster

before, and had been trained, so he did right well, I feel, in making sure this

scout got the most of the experience. The boy related how his father would find

some Pakistani in the field, explain what they were looking for, and would he/she allow the son to come work with him on these "projects" (merit badge

requirements). Then, when affirmed that the work was completed, Dad would just

sign the card. It was a great process, doing the best they could as registered

under the Lone Scout provision, but attempting to do things the "scouting way."

The cultural benefits that scout acquired were an added bonus to the scouting.

As to the question, No, don't do a thing differently. Give him a Board of Review which causes him to reflect on his scouting experience, glean what life

affirming moments he enjoyed, consider the responsibility of living up to the

expectations for Eagle Scouts, congratulate him on his achievement, adding the

sidebar expression of respect for his perseverance in doing it on his own.

Topic #3

The original post:

>Our troop has four boys that will be working towards their Eagle within the

>next 12 to 18 months. At our last committee meeting, we discussed the
>responsibility the committee has to the eagle candidate regarding the
>completion of his project. We understand the need of the committee,
troop
> leaders and boys to assist the candidate with the project's completion but
>we are not sure if financial support is necessary.

My answer is easy. The troop committee should assist as little as possible.
Let
the boy lead out. When he needs help, let him ask for it. But, don't give
him
the help right away. Properly ask him what resources he has available.
What
efforts has he already made to find resolution to the issue. When it comes
to
safety issues, adults to handle chainsaws, drive equipment, etc. Okay, well
we
will find someone qualified and able to help out with that. But a
fundamental
premise from Baden Powell is to allow the boys to do what they are
capable of
doing. I'm not saying to let the scout twist in the wind, but I am saying to
allow him to show his stuff (leadership) and to retain as much ownership
and
pride in his project as can be achieved. A little counselling is a whole lot
more supportive, given the bigger picture of the miracle scouting is to
accomplish in the life of the boy, than a boost of assistance over some road
bump in his path.

So far as fundraising, Yes, the eagle project should not be directed to fund
raising. Raising money connected with the eagle project was termed
"questionable", but I would offer this correction. It specifically states in
the Life to Eagle Packet (pg.2) that if any funds are needed for the project
that the raising of these monies would be approved. My personal
experience is
that the money is the reason for rejection of over half of the eagle service
projects which are rejected by our district advancement committee. A skill
of
leadership is Planning. And it is wholly appropriate, I feel, to ask, "Who's
paying for all this lumber?" before approving the project. That is a
consideration of planning I would think an Eagle Scout should be thinking
of,
along with safety, and feasibility. It's a resource he needs to develop. If a

scout presented a plan to raise a certain amount of money (which adhered to scouting's fundraising standards), to then pay for materials to be used in this way in such and such a project, I would feel very favorably disposed to that.

If the project is sponsored by the benefitting organization (church or school commits to pay for material) that's okay too, so have the scout say so in his packet proposal. If he can get the material donated (the more common mode), even better still.

Topic #4

The original post:

"Our unit got the new requirements for QU with our rechartering packet, and were surprised to find out that we will now be required to recharter with more boys than before in order to qualify for the QU award. Does anyone know who's lousy idea it is to make that one of the required points? "

I personally think it's a great idea. The troop which does not take an active position toward recruiting will tend to stagnate and eventually will die on the vine. Can a troop really become too large? I don't think so, if run with the patrol method and with functioning committee (as large as needful).

The

study conducted for and cited by the BSA confirms that there is a minimum

number, in fact (about 21 boys, I recall) at which scouting really takes off so far as being effective (delivering the promise). There are not many units within my eyesight here that have that many boys. I feel it's always a good

idea, even as an Ideal to "do a good turn daily" to do the good turn of offering scouting to the children in our community. The real limitation to the size of the troop would be the scoutmaster and the time he/she had available to conduct all the scoutmaster conferences. At such time the scoutmaster was "full", well, then we go down the road, find another sponsor

(chartered organization) and break off into a second troop, with another scoutmaster. So long as there are boys not in scouting who could benefit from

the experience, I don't ever feel a troop is too large.

As to this criterion being a discriminator for the Quality Unit award: If a unit is offering a "quality" program, so that it is producing "quality" scouts, then indeed, there should be no problem in attracting neighbors who are interested to join. Having the friend or neighbor come in with one of your boys and say he'd like to be part of it all, well, that is the best kind of affirmation that the unit is truly of "quality" character.

Tom Stoddard
zctcs@octopus.pgh.wec.com
(412)374-2107
Monroeville, Pennsylvania 15146

Date: Thu, 3 Apr 1997 23:48:25 -0500
From: "H. Alan Schup" <aschup@WHY.NET>
Subject: Re: Board of Review

You should be hyper about this. This young man's Eagle application is going to bounce and he will not receive his Eagle Rank. It is part of the responsibility of everyone, not just the BoR to make sure that procedure is followed.

>Am I making more out of this than I should be? Should I just chill out and
>not get so hyper? Or are my concerns legitimate. It is my understanding
>that when a Scout gets to the Eagle application, all of these dates are
>reviewed. What happens when the BoR dates are after the rank presentation?

A QUICK SYNOPSIS

After a Scout has completed all the physical requirements for a rank or Eagle Palm (excluding Scout Rank) he appears before a BoR. It is also important to review scouts that have not shown any progress in advancement over the past few months. The BoR is made of at least 3, but no more than 6 registered members of the troop committee. "Unit leaders, assistant unit leaders, relatives, or guardians may not serve as members of a Scout's BoR." The purpose of the BoR is:

(1) To make sure that the work has been learned and completed without reexamination or retest. The Scout has already been tested. The Scout should be asked where he learned his skill, who taught him, and the value

he gained from passing the requirement. The board should attempt to determine the scout's attitude and his acceptance of Scouting's ideals. "Scout Spirit is defined as LIVING the Scout Oath and Scout Law in a Scout's everyday life." A discussion of the Scout Oath and Law is in keeping with the purpose of the review, to make sure the candidate recognizes and understands the value of Scouting in his home, unit, school and community. The word REVIEW in BoR is meant as review of the personal growth of the Scout. The Scout should be seeing the "big picture" instead of the individual requirements as ends upon themselves.

(2) To check to see what kind of experience the boy is having in his patrol and troop at both the meetings and at the campouts. It should be determined if the troop program meets the needs of the scouts.

(3) To encourage the Scout to advance to the next rank. Plans and goals should be set by the Scout during the BoR toward earning the next rank, including taking leadership roles required for the next rank.

The review with the Scout should take about 15 minutes. At the conclusion of the review, the board should know whether a boy is qualified for the rank or Palm. The Scout is asked to leave the room while the board members discuss his achievements. "The decision of the BoR is arrived at through discussion and MUST be unanimous." Nothing can be added to or subtracted from any advancement requirements (except for alternate advancement programs for youth members with disabilities). A Boy Scout badge recognizes what a boy is able to do; it is not a reward for what he has done (The rank badge is proof of certain abilities, and is not just a reward for the completion of a tiresome task.) If members are satisfied that the Scout is ready to advance, he is called in, congratulated, notified as to when he will receive his recognition. If the board decides that the Scout is not ready to advance, the candidate is informed and told what he has not done satisfactorily. The BoR members should specify what should be done to rework the candidate's weaknesses and schedule another BoR for him. A follow-up letter MUST be sent to a Scout who is turned down for rank advancement, confirming the agreements reached on the actions necessary for advancement. A Scout or other interested party may appeal

the decision to the unit committee, then district level, local council level, and lastly National Council level. =14Also, the Scoutmaster is informed of the decisions of the BoR.

Date: Fri, 4 Apr 1997 09:59:15 -0500
From: "Stoddard, Thomas C." <stoddatc@WESTINGHOUSE.COM>
Subject: FW: SCOUTS-L Digest - 2 Apr 1997 to 3 Apr 1997

>Subject: Board of Review

>

>For those of you with more expertise than myself, please explain to me =
the importance of the Board of Review (not the Eagle Board of
>Review).....

>

>Marie E. Lackore
>mlackore@vbe.com

>-----

>

I'll take a stab at some comments with regard...

No, Marie, you are not being overly hyper about the Board of Review. The scout advancement plan goes simply along the lines of four steps: The scout learns, the scout is tested, the scout is reviewed, the scout is recognized. By not having the Board of Reviews regularly and consistently, a troop is missing out on a key ingredient.

What is Board of Review supposed to do? You've heard the ongoing dialoge on this list before about Boards "failing" boys, and how they should not do such, and that the scoutmaster should theoretically have assured himself that all is in order before even sending the boy before a Board. I will leave all that discussion alone and refer to those comments as more application questions, not germane to the philosophy of what is going on here.

What the Board of Review provides is a quality assurance, a "Good Housekeeping" seal of approval, if you will. It is meant as a growth experience, a reflection time, when the scout gets the chance to go back, figuratively, and think and evaluate, and review mostly to himself the scouting program he is involved in. By leading him with pointed, open-ended questions, the committee members sitting on the board can guide his discovery. "This thing that you did, what did it do for you?" The candidate should be doing most of the talking at a Board of Review,

very little telling or direction from the Board members. B-P described scouting as a game with a purpose. I like to draw the parallel in my mind that what the scoutmaster does focuses on the game, what the committee focuses on in the Board of Review is the Purpose. That is, the scout has gone along pursuing adventure, skills, fun, games, activities. At the Board of Review, the discovery should be if the scout learned anything along the way about leadership or teamwork, or did he find any associated or parallel applications in life for the skills and experience he developed, and were there underlying skills such as following directions, or accomplishing a task sequentially, or of verifying all materials and resources to being prepared for some event or communication which he found useful in his experience. And even deeper, did he come to any conclusions along the way about the importance of team members to be able to count on each other (trustworthy), to all contribute toward the good of the group (loyal), to do his part (helpful), to understand differences in ability, make compensations and get along (friendly)..... The focus of the Board of Review should be on the Aims and Methods of Scouting. And the connection should be drawn how his scout activities (the game) is helping him grow toward those aims.

I have stood atop Mt. Baldy, along with several scouts. It is an impressive experience. But, it is only half the equation. The learning is the skills getting the scout to that moment, the testing is the execution of the trek. Now comes the review. That moment on Mt. Baldy becomes almost reverential to the scout, when he is asked about it, and articulates what it means to him, and expresses of his self-doubt at the trail head, and of how he persevered, and of the adversity he encountered along the way, and of the support he felt of others in the crew whom he now regards with special bonds, who helped him carry his load, and the exhilaration of crawling those last few feet to finally stand at the summit and be able to say to himself, "I have completed my task" That learning and growth, the deepening of Ideals into heart and soul, the identification of life lessons and the setting of goals for new challenge and growth, these are the outcomes of a Board of Reveiw. It is in the Board of Review, many times, when the life-changing nature of his scouting experiences should be brought to the fore, examined, reinforced, and built on for the future.

We make a mistake, per your post, and the concern about Board of Review dates and eagle applications, of linking Boards of Review too much with

advancement only. Yes, the Boards are written as a requirement for advancement, and yes, I am an advocate of all due paperwork. These milestones are natural times for this reflection process which I describe, and hence their insertion as a procedural requirement. But if "advancement" is construed more generally to the scout learning and growing through scouting, and if the same steps of advancement are considered, of learning and testing and reviewing and recognizing, then it is easy to make the leap to my next suggestion, borne out in documentation, that a Board of Review should be an ongoing experience for every scout, regardless of rank. These sessions of review, reinforcing scouting principles, and bringing ideals and values and outcomes to the attention and consideration of the scout are most beneficial.

A Board of Review can be held any time. Not only for rank advancement. It is the committee which in organization of the unit is entrusted for administration of the troop and seeing that standards and policies are met. That's why the Board of Review is delegated to the committee. It gives the committee a chance to check, actual scout contact, to verify that the troop is accomplishing its mission. That we're really doing and achieving the objectives in the lives of boys that we set out to do when we chartered this troop. So, committee, you might rally and just hold them (Boards) on a calendar basis (semi-annually, or quarterly or something), for every boy in the troop. The boy who shows no rank advancement, you might ask to comment on his experience, and find he is "growing", but just not in ways that can be displayed on his chest. And, that's okay. We should be focusing on the Aims of Scouting, you see, not on cranking out Eagle Scouts. A boy who is inactive in troop activities, you may review and find the burdens he is bearing in life, or the alternate interests which compete for his attention, and provide for him the forum to express himself, think verbally, talk it through and find the priorities that matter most in his life. The review may be time to express confidence in a self-doubting scout, to encourage, to suggest goals the scout may set for himself to get over the next hurdle, whether it is the next badge or even a personal fear.

When I talk of quality assurance, I mean the Board of Review provides the place to assure that scouting is accomplishing its purpose (aims) in the lives of the boys. Of course, for each boy, at each age, and at each level of maturity, the Review will be different. You will expect a scout at 17 years of age to be capable to rationalize more extensively than a new 11-year old. And, so I am loathe to prescribe specifics of questions that should be asked, or the format or

content, so as not to bind anyone in a paradigm for each Board of Review. But, understanding some of these concepts of what the Board should be to the scout, and what the committee should accomplish by way of coaching, counselling, and helping deepen understanding for the scout, you now see where instructions come that it be done in a comfortable setting, that it be casual, that there be no inquisitional tone whatsoever.

When I look back on my scouting career as a boy, the Boards of Review were some of my fondest and most fruitful moments.

I hope these comments give some perspective.

Tom Stoddard
District Advancement Chair, Tecumsha District, Greater Pittsburgh
>Council.

Date: Sat, 5 Apr 1997 07:36:46 -0500
From: Mike Walton <blkeagle@DYNASTY.NET>
Subject: Re: Board of Review

Wow, Marie...how ARE those Scouts receiving their ranks WITHOUT a Board of Review?? What date are they placing on the Advancement Reports? *You're confused?* I'm surprised that some kid's parents hasn't complained until NOW!!

You asked:

>For those of you with more expertise than myself, please explain
> to me the importance of the Board of Review (not the Eagle Board
> of Review).

The BSA explains it a whole lot better *and more concisely* than I:
This is from the BSA's Advancement Procedures booklet:

(I'm going to leave some out only for space reasons; the exact wording is found on page 16 of the 1996 version of the booklet)

"A periodic review of the progress of a Scout is vital in the evaluation of the effectiveness of the Scouting program in the unit. The unit committee can judge how well the Scout being reviewed is benefitting from the program. The unit leader can

measure the effectiveness of their leadership. The Scout can sense that he is, or is not, advancing properly and can be encouraged to make the most of his Scouting experience.

Not only is it important to review those Scouts who have learned and been tested for a rank, but also to review those Scouts who have shown no progress in their advancement over the past few months.

The review is not an examination; the board does not retest the candidate. Rather, the board should attempt to determine the Scout's attitude and his acceptance of Scouting's ideals.

boldface* Scout spirit is defined as living the Scout Oath (Promise) and Scout Law in a Scout's everyday life *end boldface A discussion of the Scout Oath and Law is in keeping with the purpose of the review, to make sure that the candidate recognizes and understands the value of Scouting in his home, school and community.

my emphasis

When a boy satisfactorily **COMPLETES HIS BOARD OF REVIEW** for a rank or Eagle palm, **TENURE FOR THE NEXT RANK** or Eagle palm begins immediately. "

>The rank sequence calls for a Scoutmaster Conference and a
>Board of Review. Increasingly, I find that we are awarding the
>rank without doing the Board of Review.

Then the Scout **HAS NOT ADVANCED** to the next rank. As you can see above, **TENURE BEGINS AFTER THE COMPLETION OF THE BOARD OF REVIEW.** NOT after the Scoutmaster's Conference, which is a requirement within each rank "step".

>I am very bothered by this and have expressed my displeasure with
>the SM and the Advancement Chair. Neither seem to think it is a
>big deal.

You need to **IMMEDIATELY** contact your District Executive, **AND** your Chairman of your unit's Committee....if they've been doing this for a long time, Marie, your unit can really **MESS UP** a District's Advancement figures **AND** keep a kid from getting Eagle!!

Yes, as you wrote later on, the Eagle Scout Service **DOES** check

those dates, and if those dates are **WRONG** or reflect something really of "whack", a Scout's advancement to Eagle can be held up for **MONTHS** while your Council figures out "what's been going on".

Now, back to my original two questions above:

What date are they placing on the Advancement Report?? The date of the Scoutmaster's Conference or the date of the Board of Review?

Who's signing these Advancement Reports as "members of the Board of Review?"

and a new question, **Where does the Scoutmaster get off awarding advancements WITHOUT an Advancement report submitted to the Council office??**

What you've explained here describes a "breakdown" at several links in your Unit and District:

***The Scoutmaster is either unaware or does not care (probably on the "do not care" end, since you've brought this up before) that he CANNOT award a rank until the kid earns it...and the kid doesn't earn it until the Board of Review was conducted and he's completed and passed it (there's NO guarantee that a Board of Review will approve ALL boys' advancement to the next step; it's NOT a "rubber stamp" for whatever the Scoutmaster says)!!**

***The Committee is weak or nonexistent, because after the first couple of times at this "end run", SOMEONE OTHER THAN YOU would have immediately corrected this**

***You have a weak or nonexistent Commissioner. This person is essential in matters like this, because he or she could have easily coached the Scoutmaster and told him "hey, that's NOT the way the BSA says we need to do this....the kid needs the Board of Review for EACH rank.**

***The Council has really missed the chance to HOLD UP on all purchases of rank and cards until the Advancement Reports are in to their office. In most Councils, you can't even BUY a rank or get a card for the Scout UNTIL you turned over to them a signed and completed Advancement report. You get the unit copy back with the**

card and the rank patches.

That's why I'm saying, Marie, you need to involve your District Exec AND your Unit Chair in this matter AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. They, together with you and others, can fix this matter before it gets uncontrollable and results in a kid having to wait 6-9 weeks for his Eagle instead of the current 3-5 weeks!!

>Am I making more out of this than I should be? Should I just
>chill out and not get so hyper? Or are my concerns legitimate.

No, your concerns are VERY MUCH legit and you SHOULD NOT "chill out" until your Scoutmaster, Troop Committee Chair, Advancement Chair AND other members of your Committee get and understand the Scout Advancement process. You don't need the BSA Advancement policies booklet; the same process is explained in that Scoutmasters' Handbook on page 98. Note what it says on the BOTTOM of that page, Marie: I'm going to "scream it" only for emphasis:

"STEP 4 - The Scout is recognized

ONCE A SCOUT HAS BEEN CERTIFIED BY THE BOARD OF REVIEW, HE SHOULD BE AWARDED HIS NEW BADGE OF RANK AS SOON AS POSSIBLE -- NORMALLY IN (page 99) A CEREMONY STAGED BY THE TROOP AT ITS NEXT REGULAR MEETING. NO BOY SHOULD HAVE TO WAIT WEEKS OR MONTHS BEFORE GETTING THE BADGE HE WORKED SO HARD ON."

Hope that helps out, Marie!!

Settummanque!

Date: Mon, 7 Apr 1997 05:12:28 -0700
From: "Timothy J O'Leary" <tjo@CPTCHR.AFIP.MIL>
Subject: Re: Board of Review

Things are seriously out of control here, and it is up to you to bring some order to the situation. If any of these boys comes up for Eagle, the

procedural foul-ups could create a lot of trouble. Perhaps more importantly, the Board of Review is the major formal way for the Committee

to oversee the troop program. The committee is not an appendage - it is the group of people entrusted by both the BSA and the Chartered Organization to see that the program runs right.

Suggestions:

- 1. Since you have already had the "informal" conversation with the SM, contact the COR and, if in your judgement appropriate, the IH, and let them know your concerns and your plans as to how to deal with the problem.**
- 2. Make troop operations the sole topic for a Troop Committee meeting. Have the COR present. Achieve a meeting of the minds.**
- 3. Make sure your committee is doing what it should be doing to support the troop program. Often when committees and SM's don't get along, it turns out that the SM and/or ASMs are carrying out some committee functions. In a troop which runs both well and according to the book, the TC plays such a crucial role that the TC/SM partnership is so strong that conflicts are avoided.**
- 4. Has the SM been to the Scoutmastership Fundamentals course? If not, see if you can get him/her to go. Have you been? If not, go yourself. A CC has much more credibility if they have undertaken at least as much training as the SM.**
- 5. It is rare that "somebody needs to go" after a good relationship has been built. Building that relationship is not "an hour a week." I honestly believe that our troop has avoided any serious problems between the committee and the SM/ASM by having a committee which works well enough to avoid having the SM perform any committee functions, by having at least some members of the troop committee, myself included, having at least as much training as the SM, and by having one or more TC members present at each and every troop meeting. I believe that every single adult involved with the troop (and that means someone from every single family) can see the commitment that each of the others has to each and every other adult, and each and every boy, in the troop. When such a shared**

commitment is developed, all the rest should fall into place.

6. If you were one of the lucky troops with a really good unit commissioner, he/she would already perceive and be working on the problem.

You aren't. Find one of the volunteers at the district level to help you out. District scouters are a great resource who have often had 10 or more years of unit scouting behind them. Sometimes, this third party can see things from a perspective that all others miss.

7. If the SM needs to go, after all is said and done, talk to your CoR, your IH, and have a backup plan. Remember - making the troop work is the responsibility of each and every adult and boy, but most of all the CC.

8. Please let us know how it goes, Marie.

Timothy J. O'Leary
CC Troop 772, Post 769 and WDL, Pack 1072

Date: Thu, 10 Apr 1997 13:09:54 -0500
From: Don Dunbar III <ddunbar3@WT.NET>
Subject: Re: 5 days until 18th Birthday.....Eagle?

Don Dunbar III wrote:

>
> I have been following the thread on the 5 days until 18th birthday. I
> thought I would relay my similar experience. As District Advancement
> Chair, I was called about an upcoming eagle project. The young man, the
> son the former scoutmaster, had been away from Scouting for almost 2
> years and with his 18th birthday less than 30 days away, showed up at a
> troop meeting and announced that he wanted to finish his eagle. (He was a
> bit alarmed that he did not recognize most of the boys).

>
> The Scoutmaster and Troop Committee had signed off on the project - a
> voter registration drive. It met the criteria for a project - Community
> Service, demonstration of leadership, etc. and I approved it. A
> committee member called and asked if I could "do anything about the
> project". I replied that after it's been signed by the SM & Committee,
> and does meet the criteria, I will approve it.

>

- > The drive was performed. There were some voters registered. The
- > scoutmaster told me that during the sm conference that the young man
- > felt that the project could have been better. The SM told the scout that
- > there was still time to do more work if he wanted to. The young man
- > added an additional registration day to the project which, was more
- > successful.
- >
- > This sm conference was the first conference with the SM and the young
- > man. The SM is an Eagle Scout and has been through training. The
- > conference lasted over 1.5 hours. The scoutmaster was convinced that
- > the young man had scout spirit and signed off on his application.
- >
- > Major waves in the committee, threats of "if he makes Eagle, I will pull
- > my son out of this troop" vs "he will be an eagle or else". The
- > Scoutmaster gave me advanced warning of the possible dissention.
- >
- > Never having conducted a EBOR that denied a Scout the Eagle rank, I
- > checked with the other members of the Council Advancement Committee.
- > The consensus was that:
- >
- > There are rules and regulations established by BSA, and we as adults
- > signing our registration form agree to follow those rules and
- > regulations. That the young man had fulfilled all of the six listed
- > requirements for Eagle. (His position of leadership was SPL for 18
- > months). That he had was eligible for a Board of Review, and if the
- > troop refused to grant one, the district advancement committee or the
- > council would conduct the board and award the rank.
- >
- > The board was assembled. Before starting the administrative review, I
- > discussed the rules and requirements for Eagle. I also discussed the
- > idea of the safe haven concept. Here was a young man that had come
- back
- > in to complete his goal of achieving eagle. That he realized that his
- > absence was not a positive reflection of himself. That with the safe
- > haven, we are allowing the boys to rise to challenges, make mistakes,
- > and hopefully learn and grow into men with the values set forth in the
- > oath & law.
- >
- > The scoutmaster also came forward to speak about what he had learned
- in
- > the smconference, and why he was recommending the young man. I then
- > challenged the committee to set aside previous opinions and allow the

- > young man to be reviewed. We all knew that he would be asked about his
- > absence from scouting, but to allow him to explain what scouting meant
- > to him, and how the oath and law was part of his life.
- >
- > During the interview we discovered:
- >
- > The young man had been SPL for 18 months.
- > He dropped back when he discovered his grades were in trouble.
- > He raised his grades and graduated with National Honor Society Honors.
- > He demonstrated leadership by becoming captain of his varsity baseball
- > team and president of his church youth organization. He felt that
- > although he was not active with the troop, that he was showing scout
- > spirit by living according to the oath and law in his life outside of
- > scouting.
- >
- > During the discussion (after the interview), We talked about burnout,
- > about the fact that he had demonstrated some courage to come back this
- > close to the end to finish his project. That he had learned and
- > demonstrated leadership. He did get the award.
- >
- > We lose a lot of fine young men to perfume and gasoline, to other
- > committments and interests. Only 2 percent obtain the rank, but it is
- > their decision to earn the rank. We can bribe, threaten, and cajoule
- > (no wings - no wheels); however, it is the young man that earns the
- > award. I can not believe that it denegrates the rank by awarding a
- > young man that has the courage to come back to scouting and asks to
- > complete his goals.
- >
- > Take the opportunity at this upcoming EBOR and find out what the young
- > man has gained from your program, then decide.
- >
- > YIS
- > Don Dunbar
- > Brazos District Advancement Chair
- > Post Advisor - Post 1000 Richmond, Texas