

# Soaring News

News on advancement for the Susquehanna Council

Edition 18-2

June 2018

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

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## Cub Scout rank advancement

- **New Advancement Opportunity: Lions Arrive** [*From Advancement News; Vol 8, No 2; Mar – June 2018*]

At the end of the current school year, Lions will become the newest Cub Scout rank beginning in the fall of 2018. Cub Scout packs will welcome the new den of Lions to meetings at that time. While not participating in summer programs, these Lions will be ready to start participating in adventures to earn their badge of rank. Both all girl dens and all boy dens will be organized within a pack.

A taste of what you will soon see JUST for Lions?

- The youth handbook will get a new cover and is now called the Lion Cub Scout Handbook.
- A new rank patch will be available which can be placed on the T-shirt over their heart.
- Stickers are designed for the youth to place in their new handbooks as they complete adventures.
- Adventure Loops will be awarded and placed on the Cub Scout belt.
- A Lion advancement chart will also be available for recording and watching advancement grow

As the pack welcomes the new Lion den, more excitement is ahead as the Cub Scout family grows. For more information, visit the [Lion website](#).

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## Boy Scout rank advancement

### ➤ **Scoutbook Lite is coming to replace internet advancement**

[From Bryan On Scouting, December 21, 2017, Bryan Wendell]

The BSA announced it will release Scoutbook Lite, a new tool for quickly inputting advancement data, in the second quarter of 2018.

This free solution will replace the current Internet Advancement platform, which will be retired.

Scoutbook Lite will feature a slick new user interface. It will be optimized to whatever device you use: desktop, tablet or smart phone.

Once Scoutbook Lite is released, the Scoutbook database will become the official record of advancement for the BSA.

Scoutbook Lite, as you might guess, comes from the team behind **Scoutbook**, the BSA's advancement-tracking web app that has more than 1 million users. The Lite version of Scoutbook will incorporate key elements of the paid version.

[From Advancement News; Vol 8, No 2; Mar – June 2018]

Many questions have arisen as the journey to release Scoutbook Lite in the 2nd quarter of this year continues. Here are answers to some questions and a general update.

What will be the release date? The expectation is that Scoutbook Lite will be released sometime during the next few months; an exact release date has not been confirmed. This is the result of the BSA taking appropriate steps to have developers finish final coding and user interfaces. Within this process selected volunteers are engaging with testing and evaluation of this new tool.

How does someone access Scoutbook Lite? The process to access Scoutbook Lite, once it is available, has not been finalized at this time. More information and communication will be shared about this via Workplace, Bryan on Scouting Blog, and the Scout Executive Council Packet when this online tool is available.

Can I get a preview of Scoutbook Lite? If you expect to attend (or you know volunteers or staff attending) the National Annual Meeting in Dallas <http://nam.scouting.org/>, encourage them to stop by the "Scoutbook section" of the exhibit hall for more info.

What date will Internet Advancement portal be closed? This will happen after the release of Scoutbook Lite, so that units will always have a venue for submitting advancement records online.

Is there a council information packet that can be used to communicate with volunteers on the website and in trainings other than what was previously listed on the Bryan on Scouting blog? Additional communications materials are being explored to help with this. Scoutbook Lite is being created with a simple user interface that volunteers (and those promoting this online tool) will find easy to understand and use.

Is Scoutbook Lite optimized for desktop and mobile? We've all heard "mobile first" but Scoutbook Lite is even better. Professional user experience designers have

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worked hard to optimize your user experience for both a big desktop display and mobile tablets and smart phones.

What other features can we expect to see in the future on Scoutbook Lite? Replacing Internet Advancement is just the first release of Scoutbook Lite. In the future, you will also experience features that track Service Hours, Hiking Logs, and Camping Logs.

## Merit Badges

- **Current Council policies and procedures.** The Council has developed policies and procedures regarding advancement that have been approved for application in the Susquehanna Council. The Council's policies and procedures supplement the policies and procedures prescribed in BSA's Guide to Advancement. The objective of the policies and procedures is to provide clear standards and expectations to promote understanding and uniform application of the advancement program across the council and facilitate dissemination. Listed below are the policies and procedures currently approved dealing with merit badges.

### **Section 3. Merit badges**

#### **3.1. Request to serve as a counselor.**

##### 3.1.1. Policy.

- a. The District Advancement Committee is the designated authority for approval of counselors in their District for all merit badges. {Approved by CAC, 3/6/18}
- b. District Advancement Committee is responsible to ensure counselors meet all qualifications established by BSA prior to approval. {Approved by CAC, 3/6/18}
- c. The final approval of the addition or deletion of merit badges for a counselor requires the approval of at least two members of the District Advancement Committee. {Approved by CAC, 3/6/18}
- d. An individual in the Susquehanna Council can serve as a counselor for a maximum of eight merit badges at any one time. {Approved by CEB<sup>2</sup>, 3/17/18}
- e. A merit badge counselor must utilize BSA's most current Merit Badge Counselor Information form to request to add or drop the merit badges for which the counselor requests approval. A complete and signed form must be submitted to the Council Service Center. Incomplete forms will be returned without further action. {Approved by CAC, 4/2/18}

<sup>1</sup> CAC stands for Susquehanna Council Advancement Committee

<sup>2</sup> CEB stands for Susquehanna Council Executive Board

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- f. In order for a request to be complete, the merit badge counselor must provide a list of qualifications for each merit badge for which the counselor requests approval. The list must provide specific information that demonstrates the individual's qualifications in the subject of the merit badge, such as training or education completed, certifications received, and experience (work or personal activity). The counselor should use as much space as necessary to provide their qualifications (such as using additional lines on the form or attach an extra page). The counselor must provide copies of appropriate certificates with the Information form. {Approved by CAC, 4/2/18}
  - g. The counselor's signature on the Merit Badge Counselor Information form certifies that the counselor agrees to fully comply with all of the standards and instructions provided on the front and back of the form. Counselors are strongly encouraged to carefully read: a) the required qualifications and stipulations that they are agreeing to on the front of the form and b) all of the instructions on the back of the form. {Approved by CAC, 4/2/18}
- 3.1.2. Procedure or practice.
- a. Approval procedure.
    - 1) Prerequisites. The Council Registrar is responsible to first verify that the counselor requesting approval meets the following prerequisites.
      - a) Registered with BSA
      - b) YPT current
      - c) PA clearances current
    - 2) Qualifications. Following receipt of the request to add or drop merit badges with verification that all prerequisites are met, the Advancement Committee is responsible to make the determination if the applicant is qualified for each merit badge by reviewing the qualifications submitted by the applicant to serve as a counselor.
    - 3) Notification. The Advancement Committee will provide to the Council Registrar their determination on requests to add or drop merit badges. The Council Registrar will notify the counselor of the committee's determination.  
{Approved by CAC, 3/6/18}

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## 3.2. Renewal as a counselor

### 3.2.1. Policy.

- a. Counselors must reregister annually to continue as a counselor for previously approved merit badges. The Council registrar will assist counselors in reregistering by sending them a re-registration letter. The counselor must submit a complete and signed re-registration letter to the Council Service Center by the stated date in order to reregister. Failure to meet prerequisites and submit the re-registration letter will result in suspension as a counselor for all previously approved merit badges. Continued failure to meet prerequisites and submit the re-registration letter will result in the requirement to reapply for approval as a counselor for those merit badges. The counselor's signature on the re-registration letter certifies that the counselor agrees to fully comply with all of the standards and instructions provided on the front and back of the Merit Badge Counselor Information form. {Approved by CAC, 4/2/18}
- b. The Council will periodically publish a list of all approved merit badge counselors in the Council with personal contact information. The Council Advancement committee will determine the frequency. The Council registrar will send the list only to each unit's chartered organization representative, committee chair person, and scoutmaster (the key three), in order to protect privacy. Scouts are prohibited from receiving a copy of the Council's list. At a minimum, the registrar will publish the list following completion of the annual re-registration of counselors. {Approved by CAC, 4/2/18}

### 3.2.2. Procedure or practice

- a. Advancement committee involvement in re-registration.  
The following procedures are established for the involvement of the Council and District advancement committees in the annual process of re-registration of merit badge counselors.
  - 1) Shortly after the published deadline for submission of the re-registration letters from counselors, the Registrar will provide a list to the Council and District Advancement committees of the counselors that have not responded.
  - 2) The Council Advancement committee will establish a final cut-off date for submission of re-registration letters following the published deadline for submission of the letters. The failure to submit a re-registration letter by that date will result in removal of the counselor from the approved list of counselors and possibly require them to reapply for approval as a counselor with the Merit Badge Counselor Information form.

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- 3) Using the list provided by the Registrar, each District Advancement committee will follow-up with the counselors in their district that have not submitted their re-registration to ensure they are aware that their status as an approved MB counselor in the Council is in jeopardy, remind them of the actions they need to take, and ensure that they are informed of the final cut-off date.
- 4) The Registrar will finalize the list of approved merit badge counselors immediately following the final cut-off date.
- 5) After the final cut-off date, the Registrar will provide a list to the Council and District Advancement committees of the counselors that have still not responded and are now no longer an approved MB counselor. The list of no longer approved counselors will be included with the list of approved counselors when that list is sent to leaders in the units.

{Approved by CAC, 5/7/18}

### 3.3. Merit badge blue cards

#### 3.3.1. Policy.

- a. It is the Scoutmaster's responsibility to sign blue cards, because of the counseling opportunity involved. The Scoutmaster's signature constitutes approval for a Scout to proceed with working on a merit badge and verification that the Scout plans to work with a counselor that is registered and approved by the council advancement committee. The Scoutmaster may delegate authority to sign cards and conduct the discussions. If delegated, this authority should be entrusted to a knowledgeable assistant Scoutmaster through a specific and formal assignment of the authority that is communicated to the troop's Scouts, adult leaders, and parents and enforced. The Scoutmaster should consider making more of the process than just providing a signature. The opportunity exists to provide inspiration and direction in a young man's life.

See Guide to Advancement section 7.0.0.3. {Approved by CAC, 6/4/18}

#### 3.3.2. Procedure or practice. None at this time.

### ➤ **Scoutbook vs. Blue Cards** [*From Advancement News; Vol 8, No 2; Mar – June 2018*]

Technology is a great thing but sometimes what we think it will do for us is not exactly the way things turn out. Take for example the wonderful world of Scoutbook (the BSA-owned, record-keeping program). This extremely useful software tool was developed to help units, parents, and Scouts to monitor advancement progress. Scoutbook offers numerous applications, however there are limitations and restrictions to what Scoutbook can and should do.

**Most importantly, Scoutbook is not an official advancement document nor is it a replacement for the "Application for Merit Badge", aka- the "Blue Card" (No. 34124).**

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The Blue Card is the Scout's official record for keeping track of merit badge advancement. Blue Cards provide information beyond the data stored on Scoutbook. Blue Cards show when the Scout met with their unit leader to discuss the badge and received acknowledgement to pursue the merit badge. Blue Cards list when various requirements have been completed as verified by the counselor's initials as well as provide helpful information for the merit badge counselor.

More importantly, Blue Cards are the documented record needed for any historical proof that a merit badge was earned. Thus, if it ever became necessary, the Blue Card is the source of proof that a merit badge was indeed earned. Should a dispute arise such as a rank appeal, including for the rank of Eagle Scout, the Blue Card could decide the issue.

Though some might suggest Scoutbook can do the same, note that digital platforms change over time, occasionally get corrupted and cannot provide proof that all the steps in earning a merit badge (Unit Leader discussions and signature, Merit badge counselor final signature) have been completed.

In essence, though it is useful to use the Scoutbook platform for entering information, it does not replace the required signed Blue Card which must be retained by the Scout, the Scoutmaster, and the Merit Badge counselor.

## ➤ Current merit badge requirements.

- The current requirements for all merit badges are available at this link: <https://www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/advancement-and-awards/merit-badges/>
- The following merit badges have requirements that were updated and are effective in 2018.
  - [Animal Science](#)  (4; for Avian option: 6e)
  - [Archaeology](#)  (1, 2, 3, 4; new 5; 7, 8, 10)
  - [Archery](#)  (4d)
  - [Astronomy](#)  (4b, 6b, 8b)
  - [Athletics](#)  (added note on religious exemptions; 2; 3a)
  - [Camping](#)  (3, 8d)
  - [Canoeing](#)  (10, 12c)
  - [Chemistry](#)  (5, 6b, 6c)
  - [Coin Collecting](#)  (5)
  - [Communication](#)  (1a)
  - [Crime Prevention](#)  (2, 8)
  - [Electronics](#)  (4)
  - [Emergency Preparedness](#)  (2a, 2b, 6a, 6c)
  - [Energy](#)  (1a, 1b)
  - [First Aid](#)  (2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11)
  - [Insect Study](#)  (new 6b)
  - [Medicine](#)  (1, 4a, 4b; new 5c; 6, 9)
  - [Nature](#)  (4d[1], 4e[1])

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- [Personal Fitness](#)  (1a, 4c, 4d, new 4e)
- [Plant Science](#)  (for 8, field botany option: a, f1[a])
- [Public Health](#)  (1, 2b, 2c, 5, new 6c, 7)
- [Radio](#)  (9d[5])
- [Scouting Heritage](#)  (4b)
- [Sculpture](#)  (2a)
- [Theater](#)  (1, 3, 5; deleted 6)
- [Weather](#)  (10)
- [Wilderness Survival](#)  (4, 9, 11)

## Advancement to Eagle

- **Current Council policies and procedures.** The Council has developed policies and procedures regarding advancement that have been approved for application in the Susquehanna Council. The Council's policies and procedures supplement the policies and procedures prescribed in BSA's Guide to Advancement. The objective of the policies and procedures is to provide clear standards and expectations to promote understanding and uniform application of the advancement program across the council and facilitate dissemination. Listed below are the policies and procedures currently approved dealing with merit badges.

### **Section 4. Advancement to Eagle**

#### **4.1. Service project.**

##### 4.1.1. Policy.

- a. The District Advancement Committee is the designated authority to review and approve service project proposals for advancement to Eagle for Scouts in their District. {Approved by CAC, 4/2/18}

##### 4.1.2. Procedure or practice. None at this time.

#### **4.2. Fund raising**

##### 4.2.1. Policy.

- a. The District Advancement Committee is the designated authority to review and approve the Eagle Scout Service Project Fundraising Application for Scouts in their District for expected fund raising amounts up to \$500. The Council Advancement Committee is the designated authority to review and approve applications for expected fund raising over \$500. {Approved by CAC, 4/2/18}
- b. The Council prohibits Scouts from using a crowd funding platform (such as GoFundMe) to raise funds for an Eagle Scout Service Project. See Guide to Advancement sections 9.0.2.10. {Approved by CAC, 4/2/18}

##### 4.2.2. Procedure or practice. None at this time.

#### **4.3. References.**

##### 4.3.1. Policy.

- a. For Eagle requirement 2, a Scout must identify on his Eagle Scout Rank application six potential references to provide a recommendation on his behalf (at least five if not employed).

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- 1) The Scout must provide a reference for each category listed on the application (except employer, if not employed). However, if the Scout is not affiliated with an organized religion, then the parent or guardian provides this reference.
- 2) There are no restrictions on who the Scout may list for his two other references. He can list anyone he chooses, including parents or guardians not previously listed, other relatives, Scout leaders including those from his unit, or other Scouts and friends. However, the Council suggests (does not require) the Scout consider identifying these references from individuals that he knows outside of his family and scouting, such as school, church, sports, or other activities to provide a broader insight to his character and leadership.

See Guide to Advancement sections 9.0.1.3. {Approved by CAC, 4/2/18}

- b. The Council requests the Scout contact each reference and ask the individual to submit a letter of recommendation on the Scout's behalf. The Scout is encouraged to use the letter of instruction provided by the Council to provide to the reference the information regarding the letter of recommendation (available on the Council's web site). However, the Scout is not required to contact the references. The Council highly encourages obtaining written letters of recommendation from references for inclusion in the Scout's Eagle packet. The Council requests that unit leaders encourage and help, if needed, obtaining the letters before submission of the packet. If the Scout chooses not to contact the references, the unit is expected to inform the District Advancement Committee of that decision when the application is submitted to Council. {Approved by CAC, 4/2/18; revised by CAC 6/4/18}
- c. If the Scout does not submit any letters of recommendation from his references with his Eagle packet, it is the responsibility of the District Advancement Committee to try to secure recommendations from the references appearing under requirement 2 on the Eagle Scout Rank Application. The District Advancement Committee will establish its own procedures to secure any recommendations. The committee is encouraged to make contact as soon as possible following receipt of the packet and before the board of review to determine if the reference will provide a recommendation. The submission of a written recommendation is strongly encouraged to facilitate review by members of the board. {Approved by CAC, 6/4/18}

4.3.2. Procedure or practice. None at this time.

<sup>1</sup> CAC stands for Susquehanna Council Advancement Committee

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## **4.4. Submission of packet for advancement.**

### 4.4.1. Policy.

- a. The unit must submit a complete packet to the Council Service Center for the final process to begin for approval of the advancement to Eagle. The unit, not the Scout, is responsible for delivering the complete packet to the Council Service Center. A complete packet includes the following:

- 1) Eagle Scout Rank Application with all information complete and required signatures obtained. If the unit leader and/or the committee chair choose not to sign the application, the application will be accepted if all other information is complete.
- 2) Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook with all sections (project proposal, project plan, project report, and fund raising application, if applicable) complete and required signatures obtained. If the project beneficiary and/or unit leader choose not to sign the workbook, the workbook will be accepted if all other information is complete.
- 3) The Scout's statement of ambitions and life purpose, with a list of leadership positions held and honors and wards received.

It is the unit's responsibility to ensure a complete packet is submitted to the Council Service Center. When the Council Service Center determines a packet is incomplete, the processing of the packet will stop, the unit and District Advancement Committee will be notified of the discrepancies, and the packet will be returned to the unit. It is the unit's responsibility to pick up the packet as soon as possible and assist the Scout in correcting the discrepancies.

See Guide to Advancement sections 9.0.1.4 and 9.0.1.5. {Approved by CAC, 4/2/18; revised by CAC 6/4/18}

### 4.4.2. Procedure or practice. None at this time.

## **4.5. Board of Review.**

### 4.5.1. Policy.

- a. The District Advancement Committee is the designated authority to convene and administer Eagle Scout boards of review for Scouts in their District, including the scheduling of the boards (date, time, and location) and the selection and training of members for the board. The Chair of the District Advancement Committee will designate a chair person for each board. {Approved by CAC, 4/2/18}
- b. The composition of an Eagle board of review must include at least one troop committee member from the same troop as the scout appearing before the board. Districts are encouraged to include local business and community leaders as members of Eagle boards of review. {Approved by CAC, 6/4/18}

### 4.5.2. Procedure or practice

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## **4.6. Eagle palms.**

4.6.1. Policy. None at this time.

4.6.2. Procedure or practice

- a. After a Scout has been validated as an Eagle Scout by the National Service Center, the Scout is entitled to receive an Eagle Palm for each additional five merit badges earned beyond those applied towards meeting the requirement for Eagle and completed before the Scout's Eagle board of review. The Council establishes the following procedures for approval of Eagle palms for additional merit badges earned by a Scout before his Eagle board of review.
  - 1) The Scout and his unit leadership must utilize the Eagle Scout Palm application [available on the Council's website] to identify the merit badges to be applied for each palm the Scout is eligible to receive [one form per eligible palm]. List each of the five merit badges earned beyond those applied towards meeting the requirement for Eagle or another palm and completed before the Scout's Eagle board of review.
  - 2) The time requirement of 3 months elapsing since the board of review for the Eagle Scout award does not apply to merit badges earned before the Scout's Eagle board of review, so line through that portion of the statement in the application section of the form. Also, cross out the section for action by a board of review on the right side of the form.
  - 3) The unit's scoutmaster or committee chair must verify through the internet advancement records the following:
    - a) The listed merit badges were not applied towards the merit badge requirements for Eagle or another Eagle palm.
    - b) The Scout completed the merit badges before the date of the Eagle board of review.
  - 4) Once the unit's leader has verified the prerequisites above, the unit leader will approve the award by signing the application. The unit should maintain a copy of the approved application in the unit's advancement records.
  - 5) Following approval of the application for a palm by a unit leader, the unit must enter the award of the palm into the internet advancement system.
  - 6) The unit will submit a copy of the approved application and the internet advancement record to the Council when purchasing the palm device and card. Submission of this documentation is required to authorize purchase of the Eagle palm items from the Council's Scout Store.
  - 7) The award of palms that include merit badges earned after the Scout's Eagle board of review must meet all of the requirements established by BSA for Eagle palms.

{Approved by CAC, 4/2/18}

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## Links

Guide to Advancement: <https://www.scouting.org/resources/guide-to-advancement/>  
Advancement News from the National Advancement Program Team,

Jan-Feb 2018: [https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/advancement\\_news/2018\\_Jan-Feb.pdf](https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/advancement_news/2018_Jan-Feb.pdf)

Mar-Jun 2018: <http://files.constantcontact.com/137c2ed6201/a12ace4f-01d3-41b7-a8fb-6abd6cfcb6b3.pdf>

Merit badge requirements: <https://www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/advancement-and-awards/merit-badges/>

Advancement and awards: <https://www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/advancement-and-awards/>