

Soaring News

News on advancement for the Susquehanna Council

Edition 19-3

May 2019

This newsletter is prepared by the Susquehanna Council Advancement committee as a resource for leaders of cub scout and Scouts BSA 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.

Headlines

[Guide to Advancement 2019](#) {Important info repeated from content in Edition 19-2}

Cub Scout rank advancement

[Scoutbook - June 1 is significant](#)

[Earning Arrow of Light](#) {Important info repeated from content in Edition 19-2}

[National Summertime Awards](#)

Scouts BSA rank advancement

[Reporting advancement](#)

Merit Badges

[Annual Re-registration of merit badge counselors](#) {Important info updated from content in Edition 19-2}

[Training for merit badge counselors](#) {Important info repeated from content in Edition 18-5, 18-6, and 19-2}

[Preparation for merit badges at summer camp](#) {Important info repeated from content in Edition 19-2}

Soaring News

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Edition 19-3

May 2019

Guide to Advancement 2019

GTA 2019: The Official Source for All Advancement [*Article from Advancement News, March-April 2019*]

“The current edition of the *Guide to Advancement* is the official source for administering advancement in all Boy Scouts of America programs: Cub Scouting, Scouts BSA, Venturing, and Sea Scouts. It replaces any previous BSA advancement manuals and previous editions of the Guide to Advancement.” (GTA Topic 1.0.0.0)

The *Guide to Advancement* is updated periodically in response to changes to programs, requirements, and policies, as well as comments and recommendations received by the National Advancement Program Team. The *Guide to Advancement 2019* is now the “current edition.” It can be found online at

www.scouting.org/advancement in both HTML and PDF format. Printed copies will soon be available in your local Scout shop for purchase, if they are not already there, but when shopping note that the SKU is 648216, and the publication number, 33088, has not changed, so be sure to ask for the *Guide to Advancement 2019*.

The 2019 edition replaces all previous editions of the *GTA* and any other advancement manuals. It is the source for all advancement policies and procedures and, unless specifically exempted, it supersedes any BSA publications that may conflict with it. Every section of the 2019 guide has received some minor revisions since the last printed edition, primarily to reflect the addition of female youth to Cub Scouting and Scouts BSA. The following topics merit close review:

General - Revisions have been made throughout this guide to make clear that all guidance and requirements of the rank advancement and awards programs apply equally to male and female Scouts. All references to the Varsity program have been removed, except when past participation in a Varsity team could be relevant, such as service in a position of responsibility. To reflect the Bylaws of the Boy Scouts of America, the objectives of Scouting, otherwise known as the aims, have been modified wherever they appear to include character development, citizenship training, leadership, and mental and physical fitness. When used throughout this guide, *Scouts BSA Handbook* refers to both the *Scouts BSA Handbook for Boys* and the *Scouts BSA Handbook for Girls*.

Section 1 - Three frequently asked questions about special needs Scouting were added.

Section 3 - The educational presentation summaries were removed. However, updated presentations are still available at <https://www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/resources/advancement-presentations/>. The National Advancement Program Team strongly recommends that unit leaders and volunteers review those presentations.

Section 4 - For Cub Scouting, changes were made to reflect adding the Lion rank. Essentially all references to the Varsity Scouting program have been removed. For Scouts BSA, the *Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook* was added to the list of items that may *not* be required for a unit leader conference for the Eagle Scout rank. For Venturing and Sea Scouts, clarifications were added concerning

Soaring News

News on advancement for the Susquehanna Council

Edition 19-3

May 2019

conducting Scouts BSA boards of review, processing Summit Award applications, and processing Quartermaster rank applications.

Section 7 - Revised to reflect current registered adult leadership requirements as stated in the *Guide to Safe Scouting* and in BSA social media guidelines.

Section 8 - Added clarification about the scheduling of boards of review under disputed circumstances.

Section 11 - Removed the listing of Advancement and Recognition Literature and Resources from the guide.

A complete list of the changes to the *Guide to Advancement 2019* can be found in Section 1.0.3.0 beginning on Page 7. However, it would be wise to consider carefully reviewing all those sections that impact your Scouting responsibilities.

Cub Scout rank advancement

➤ **Scoutbook - June 1 is significant** [*Article from Advancement News, May-June 2019*]

Traditionally, June 1 of each year served as the date for Cub Scouts to begin the next rank in their advancement. With the widespread use of ScoutBook, leaders are an integral part of the process. Answers to a few questions that advancement administrators and others in a typical pack may be asking:

How do we move the Cub Scouts forward to the next rank?

The leader/advancement chair/ administrators will need to mark the ranks for all the Scouts as “approved.” Once they are approved, they will show up on the “need purchasing report.” Once the adventure is awarded, that notation is made. Then the administrator will go in and update the records one-on-one or do a multi-update and update all the Scouts in the den at the same time.

When can the Scout start work on the next rank advancements?

As the Scout’s progress is updated, they will then be able to begin working on the next adventure/rank.

If a Scout starts the next rank before approval, what is the consequence?

If they start before June 1st, they can show progress – but things will not be “official” until leaders “approve” advancement.

How is Cub Scout recording linked to the current rank for that Cub Scout?

A Cub Scout is only able to work on the den details for which the membership in Scoutbook is active. For example, if the Scout is a lion, they will see “lion.” The leadership will need to move the Scouts into the next den in order to see the next advancements.

Soaring News

News on advancement for the Susquehanna Council

Edition 19-3

May 2019

- **Earning Arrow of Light.** An important reminder for any Cub Scout that seeks to earn the Arrow of Light. The Scout must complete all of the requirements and the award of the rank is recorded as a Cub Scout before the scout is registered as a Scouts BSA member. It is suggested that award of the rank is complete before a crossover ceremony. However, since the crossover ceremony is just an event and may take place before the Scout is registered as a Scouts BSA member, the key is to make sure the rank is awarded before registration as a Scouts BSA member. If the rank is not awarded before registering as a Scouts BSA member and once a Scout transfers from a pack to a troop, it is not possible to retroactively award the Arrow of Light.
- **National Summertime Pack Award.** [Article from Bryan on Scouting, May 2, 2017, Bryan Wendell]

Just because school classrooms go dark in the summer doesn't mean Cub Scouting has to.

Extend the fun of Cub Scouting into the year's hottest season by earning the National Summertime Pack Award.

To be eligible, your pack must hold one activity per month in June, July and August. Do that, and you'll get a streamer for your pack flag and a certificate suitable for framing.

Youth and adults who participate in all three events earn a nifty pin that can be worn on the right pocket flap of the uniform shirt.

Dens that have at least 50 percent of their youth members at the three summertime events get a den participation ribbon.

Why you should earn this award

I can think of three reasons:

- Summer is the best time to enjoy the great outdoors.
- Kids often have more free time — and fewer scheduled activities — in the summer.
- Packs that offer a year-round program see higher retention numbers.

Things to keep in mind

Many families take long vacations in the summer. Some kids even spend a week or more at grandma's house in another state.

That's why attendance at your summertime events shouldn't be mandatory. And the summer isn't a great time to get a jump start on the next program year's adventures. Best not to start the fall with Cub Scouts who have fallen behind. Instead, plan activities that are optional but exciting.

How to earn the award

Learn more and find an application for the National Summertime Pack Award [here](#).

Note from the Susquehanna Council:

This summer, the Council encourages all packs to plan activities to earn these awards! These awards provide recognition for the pack, den, and individuals. Individuals must participate in an activity in all three months to earn the pins. If earned, the Council will provide the pack certificate and pack streamer for the pack at no cost to the unit. The pack will be responsible for the purchase of den ribbons

Soaring News

News on advancement for the Susquehanna Council

Edition 19-3

May 2019

and individual pins, if earned, which are available in the council's Scout store. Units must complete and submit all of the forms to the council service center to receive the awards. Please take note before the first activity of the information and data that must be tracked for each activity to complete the application for the award.

Scouts BSA rank advancement

- **Reporting advancement.** Units are strongly encouraged to regularly submit reports of rank advancement earned by Scouts in the unit. A further encouragement is to submit those reports at least on a monthly basis.

Merit Badges

➤ **Annual Re-registration of merit badge counselors**

It is a requirement that merit badge counselors re-register annually with the Council to continue as an approved counselor for previously approved merit badges. **The current registration expires on May 31, 2019.**

In order to facilitate the re-registration of counselors, the council's Registrar sent each current counselor a re-registration letter via regular mail in late April. If a currently approved counselor has not received a re-registration letter, please contact the Council's Registrar immediately. **The counselor must complete and return the re-registration letter to the council service center by June 1** to remain registered as a merit badge counselor for another year, in addition to meeting the prerequisites (current youth protection training and PA child protection clearances). Counselors are strongly encouraged to complete and return their re-registration before the deadline.

The failure to return the re-registration letter in a timely manner will result in a termination of the individual's registration to serve as a merit badge counselor. After the designated cut-off date, an individual must reapply for approval as a merit badge counselor through submission of a new application (utilizing the Merit Badge Counselor Information form).

➤ **Training for merit badge counselors.**

All merit badge counselors are strongly encouraged to take the on-line training "Merit Badge Counselor Position Specific Training". It is important that each counselor has a full and current understanding of their responsibilities and the recommended practices for quality counseling. A foundational aspect of the scouting program is having trained leaders.

If it has been more than two years since you have taken this training or never done the training, please complete the training. The training is available on my.scouting.org under the "BSA Learn Center". The training includes the following:

- a) A module entitled "Merit Badge Counselor – Before the First Meeting". This module has five lessons with a quiz at the end of each. Each lesson is a stand-alone lesson and can be completed at different times (the individual does not have to do them all at the same sitting). It takes a total of about one hour to complete all five modules.

Soaring News

News on advancement for the Susquehanna Council

Edition 19-3

May 2019

b) A module entitled “Merit Badge Counselor – Position Trained”. This module has one lesson with a quiz at the end. It takes a total of about 15 minutes to complete the module.

- **Preparation for merit badges at summer camp.** The awesome program at Resident summer camp begins at Camp K in less than one month. **Participants are strongly encouraged to read the section on prerequisites to Be Prepared for the participation in the merit badge offerings.** Scouts and units are strongly encouraged to begin preparations now.

The 2019 Resident Camp Leader Guide provides important information on the merit badge offerings at summer camp starting on page 36 through page 39, including explanation of prerequisite requirements and “Be Prepared” requirements and the listing of those requirements for each merit badge offered at camp. The link to the Leader’s Guide on the Council’s website is [here](#).

Links

- Susquehanna Council’s Advancement pages {[click here](#)}.
- Guide to Advancement: <https://www.scouting.org/resources/guide-to-advancement/>
- Advancement News from the National Advancement Program Team, Previous issues are available at: <https://www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/advancement-and-awards/advancement-news/>
- 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/>
- Information for Life Scouts in the Susquehanna Council to help in attaining the rank of Eagle: <https://susquehannabsa.org/advancement/boy-scouts/information-and-resources-for-life-to-eagle-advancement/>