

Advancement News

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Prepared. For Life.®

As programs and opportunities modify over time, your friends at *Advancement News* will continue to be here to share these changes with you and offer insights. *Advancement News* will be uploaded directly to the [Advancement Resources](#) page of Scouting.org. Each bi-monthly edition will be found at the [Advancement News](#) page. Since advancement evolves and occasionally changes, please note that the most current information found in *Advancement News* and the online version of [Guide to Advancement](#) supersedes previous versions.

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On Increasing Advancement

Positions of Responsibility: Senior Patrol Leader

While all leadership roles in Scouting are important, and as we have talked about before in *Advancement News*, each youth leadership role serves a very important purpose. The role featured in this article is a big one – the senior patrol leader, commonly known as “The SPL”!

Scouting.org describes the role this way: “With three green bars behind the Scout emblem, the senior patrol leader’s shoulder patch symbolizes one of the oldest leadership positions in Scouting. The Boy Scouts of America has long recognized the senior patrol leader as the highest youth leadership position in a troop. They are the primary link between a troop’s Scouts and its adult leaders. They shoulder the responsibility for leading meetings of the troop and the patrol leaders’ council and provide valuable leadership in planning and carrying out the troop’s program of outdoor activities, service projects, and events.”

By definition, SPL is one of the leadership positions in a troop that meets the requirement of a leadership position for advancement, but it is even more important because it also influences the advancement progress, leadership experience, and the total experience of all the Scouts in the troop.

An element of the “magic” of Scouting and its advancement method is the gradual development of leadership skills as a Scout moves through the program. As a Scout progresses along a typical advancement path from denner, to den chief, to patrol leader, to quartermaster, to assistant senior patrol leader, to SPL, that Scout is building a personalized leadership skill set. The *Scouts BSA Handbook* explains the SPL’s advancement responsibilities best: “The SPL also appoints other youth leaders with the advice and consent of the Scoutmaster and oversees their training and work.”

In fact, the *Guide to Advancement* mentions that aspect of the position twice. First, in regard to the senior patrol leader’s potential direct role in the advancement of other Scouts, and second, in regard to the individual Scout’s progress, pointing out that the role is not required to become an Eagle Scout (as we discussed in the May-June 2021 issue):

- **4.2.1.2 The Scout Is Tested.** The unit leader authorizes those who may test and pass the Scout on rank requirements. They might include the patrol leader, the senior patrol leader, the unit leader, an assistant unit leader, or another Scout. Merit badge counselors teach and test Scouts on requirements for merit badges.
- **4.2.3.4.1 Positions Must Be Chosen From Among Those Listed.** Units do not have authority to require specific positions of responsibility for a rank. For example, they must not require a Scout to be senior patrol leader to obtain the Eagle rank.

Many a Scout has shared that the leadership and management skills they learned as a senior patrol leader – by actually leading and managing and not just reading about it – positively influenced their leadership as an adult.



From the *Guide to Advancement*

The Promise of Scouting

Let's get the word out, people! Youngsters are coming to Scouting's door every day. We promise them fun and adventure. Great grand fun and wonderful adventure! With them come their parents and families. We promise them that we have programs that will help their children to build character and learn and practice citizenship responsibilities.

We need to recognize that some of these parents and families don't have a Scouting background. They won't fully understand our Scouting methods. It is important that they understand because these methods are our way of keeping our promises.

These parents might think, for example, that advancement is just about pins and badges. The confusing thing is that, of course, advancement is about pins and badges—but it isn't only about them. Below the surface runs a deep current that teaches that pins and patches result from learning things, doing things, going places, and accomplishing things, culminating in the positive reinforcement that comes from adults and peers recognizing individual effort and accomplishment via an appropriate advancement ceremony. That recognition is one of the big things that keep youth in Scouting. And we need to keep them around to fulfill our mission.

So, get the word out, people. Make sure that everyone in your Scouting community understands the advancement method. No matter what their Scouting background, if they understand what we're trying to do and why we're trying to do it, then everyone will be able to work together to help our young people grow into useful citizens with praiseworthy character.

To be a leader in advancement you need to show leadership. Leadership in this case is delivering a clear consistent message at every opportunity. The message is that advancement is a method that we use to help Scouts grow and make them want to stay in Scouting. At every opportunity reinforce the reasons for the advancement method. Make sure that all your constituents, no matter their background, understand what we're trying to do. Make sure they understand why we do what we do. Make the *Guide to Advancement* your friend and companion so that you can acquaint others with this valuable resource!

If you do this, we will have an advancement program that everyone supports. This way we will keep our young people in Scouting so that we can influence their character. Now, isn't that what we're all about?

See the *Guide to Advancement*, Section 3.0.0.3 Unit Advancement Responsibilities, Item 2, "Educate parents, guardians, unit leadership, and committee members on appropriate methods to stimulate and encourage advancement.

Cub Scouts

Nineteen Elective Adventures Being Retired in 2022



Every year Cub Scout Adventures are reviewed to identify trends and determine interests of our youth, den leaders, and Cub Scout families. Specifically, elective Adventures are reviewed for both content and popularity to keep the Cub Scouting Adventure program relevant to today's families.

The most recent review has identified 19 elective Adventures that do not meet the standards of youth and den leader engagement, with the lowest rated being earned by less than 3% of eligible youth. Therefore, these 19 Adventures will be retired effective May 31, 2022.

We know that some families may want one last chance to earn one or more of these Adventures. Some den leaders may have already made plans for the upcoming program year, so these Adventures will be available until the end of 2021-2022 program year:

Rank	Adventure Names
Tiger	Family Stories; Earning Your Stripes; Tiger Tales; Tiger Theater
Wolf	Collections and Hobbies; Grow Something; Hometown Heroes; Motor Away
Bear	Beat of the Drum; World of Sound; Make it Move; Robotics
Webelos/AOL	Looking Back Looking Forward; Maestro; Project Family; Build My Hero; Adventures in Science; Fix It; Movie Making

Your Unit Yearly Plan can benefit from this information. As you are planning the activities for the coming year, explore Cub Scouts and families' interest in some of these Adventures. For example, the Wolf Cub Scout den may want to schedule a trip to a community agency, or plan a meeting to construct care packages with thank you notes to send to honor a service man or service woman. Another example might involve the Bear Cub Scout den visiting a place that uses robots and then to construct the robot hand. The possibilities are endless and the Cub Scouts will have a memory and a token to show their achievement, which after May of 2022 will no longer be available.



Continued on page 5

Frequently Asked Questions

Why are these 19 elective Adventures being retired?

In our ongoing efforts to keep the Cub Scouting Adventure program relevant to today's families, Cub Scout elective Adventures are reviewed for content and popularity. These 19 Adventures are the least popular among Cub Scouts based on sales and advancement data. The retiring of these Adventures allows Cub Scouting to be more agile as we make continuous improvements to the program.

Why May 31, 2022?

We understand that some families may want one last chance to earn these Adventures and some Den Leaders may have already made plans for the next program year, so we are giving a full program year to allow for this transition. June 1st is when the vast majority of Cub Scouts have transitioned to the next rank.

Can Cub Scouts still earn these Adventures in the 2021-22 program year?

Yes! These elective Adventures can still be earned during the 2021-22 program year. These 19 Adventures will remain part of the program until May 31, 2022.

What happens on May 31, 2022?

Effective May 31, 2022 these Elective Adventures will no longer be considered part of the Cub Scouting program and the Adventure Loops and Pins for these Cub Scout Adventures will no longer be available for purchase.

What happens to Adventures earned before May 31, 2022?

Earned Adventures will be archived in Scoutbook and Internet Advancement and will appear as earned but will no longer be able to be marked as completed after May 31, 2022.

Side bar end

Can Cub Scouts still wear the Adventure Loops and Pins after they retire?

Absolutely! In Scouting once an Adventure is earned it is never taken away. These Adventures are still considered official program and may continue to be worn after they retire on May 31, 2022.

To see this announcement in the original format, click here:

<http://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/se-packet/2021-05-10/Announcement-retiring-adventures-SE-packet.pdf>

To find out more, visit the Cub Chat Live! from May 14, 2021

[Scouting magazine - #CubChatLive: Retiring Elective Cub Scout Adventures | Facebook](#)



New Adventures—An Opportunity for You

Have you had an inspiration and feel that the idea would make for a great Cub Scout Adventure? The National Cub Scouting committee is always reviewing elective Adventures. In addition this group is looking at new Adventures for each rank. Your idea for a potential new elective Adventure is always welcome.

Visit the [Preview Adventures](https://www.previewadventures.org) website. Here you will find a “Preview Adventure Recommendation Form”. Complete the form and submit it to previewadventures@scouting.org. Your great idea for a dynamic activity for Cub Scouts might become a part of the Cub Scout program.



About *Advancement News*

Advancement News is the official e-letter of the Boy Scouts of America National Advancement Program Team. Its intent is to provide and clarify procedures found in the *Guide to Advancement*, announce various changes and updates in advancement, and to assist advancement committees in making decisions that can help increase the rate of advancement. Therefore, districts and councils may reprint articles from this publication. Our plan is to distribute six issues of *Advancement News* annually, but special editions may go out whenever there is important information to share. Feedback, suggestions, and letters to the editor are welcome at advancement.team@scouting.org

Sea Scouts

Sea Scouts

There was a positive for Sea Scouts leaders that came out of the down time during the COVID-19 quarantine. Adult leadership training -- through a course called Seabadge, a “cousin” of Wood Badge – went virtual via Zoom. This move allowed more Sea Scout leaders to be trained in the last 10 months than were trained in the previous four years combined, confirmed national training chair Cassie Johnson of Houston.



Some have asked how that momentum could be sustained, so a group of Sea Scout youths decided to take that concept a virtual step further and get students to advance on-line with a Virtual National Sea Scout Academy which will be held October 16 through 22 on Zoom. The event is being planned and run by a large committee made up of Sea Scouts and Scouters across the nation. The idea is to pattern the Zoom meeting after previous in-person academies in Texas and Virginia, affirmed Harvey Morrissey, event chair. A Sea Scout Academy is sort of like a summer camp, where Scouts get together and work on advancement requirements.

"My vision for this academy is to advance Sea Scouts rapidly and effectively, and to develop healthy leaders with the purpose of serving others," said Morrissey, from Ocala, Florida, and the immediate past National Yeoman. "I am confident that this event will assist the individual Sea Scouts to challenge themselves to set their proverbial sails and carry them to reach shore as better Sea Scouts."

Johnson said many of the advantages for virtual meetings were made clear during Seabadge training on Zoom: "There are no travel expenses, you aren't sharing a room with folks who snore, and you get to have whatever you want for lunch. This is an easy way for Sea Scouts to advance in their respective ranks and meet other Sea Scouts from coast to coast."

Another positive is that many of the courses will be taught by youths, which is a requirement in the Sea Scout manual. "Sea Scout advancement to Quartermaster requires teaching others some of what you've learned," said National Commodore T.W. Cook of Austin. "It is hard to get critical mass together to hold an in-person event like this, but if we pool our resources across the country for a virtual event, everyone will have the opportunity to attend. And finding instructors won't be a problem."

There will be no cost for National Sea Scout Academy. Registration is not live yet, but the link will be posted soon to seascout.org, as well as the national Sea Scout Facebook page: Sea Scouts BSA.





Venturing TRUST Award

With today's society so diverse, understanding others is an important part of being able to "trust" others in a world with so many differences. The Venturing TRUST Award is based upon developing an understanding of cultures and their religions. The award allows youth Venturers to explore their own religion, as well as to learn about other religions and cultures and promotes seeking understanding to help develop trust.

Additional details and the requirements about the Venturing TRUST Award can be found at: <https://www.scouting.org/programs/venturing/venturing-awards-and-advancement/specialty-awards/trust-award/>

Venturing Quest Award

The Venturing Quest Award focuses on physical fitness relating to sports and promoting a healthy lifestyle. The award encompasses a variety of experiences that introduce a youth Venturer to the opportunities of living a wholesome, healthy life. The award provides a variety of sports related activities for Venturers to explore. They can choose sports that they have experience with or choose sports that are new to them. The goal is to promote sportsmanship and fitness.

This award can be earned by completing learning about the essentials of sports, understanding how fitness for life can be beneficial, completing a fitness assessment, understanding different sports disciplines, practicing sports nutrition, and learning the history and heritage of sports. It focuses on the Venturer's personal goals, encouraging achievement of those that are both realistic and comfortable.

Additional details and the requirements for the Venturing Quest Award can be found at: <https://www.scouting.org/programs/venturing/venturing-awards-and-advancement/specialty-awards/quest-award/>.



Worth Repeating

November, 2011

From the Guide to Advancement

Active Participation and Applying the “Third Test”

“The *Guide to Advancement*, in topic 4.2.3.1, takes a new approach in determining whether a Scout has been ‘active’ to the extent required for rank advancement. Three sequential tests are set forth. The first two require a Scout to be registered and in ‘good standing.’ For the third test, a Scout is evaluated against the unit’s reasonable expectations that refer to a level of activity. If the Scout does not meet these expectations, however, the Scout may still be considered active for the purposes of advancement. In summary, here’s how it works.

“First, a board of review must agree that Scouting’s values have taken hold and been exhibited. The *Guide to Advancement* expands on this. If such agreement can be reached, then one of the following must be established:

1. The unit’s reasonable expectations that refer to a level of activity have not been met due to other positive endeavors in or out of Scouting. For example, activity with the Order of the Arrow, the religious institution, school, sports, or clubs that also develop character, citizenship, or personal fitness, may be considered and “counted.”

OR

2. The unit’s reasonable expectations that refer to a level of activity have not been met due to noteworthy circumstances that have prevented a higher level of participation. These may be medical, educational, family, or other issues that for practical purposes limit the Scout’s ability to participate. If it can be established that the individual would have been more active if they could have been, then the Scout is deemed “active” for the purposes of advancement.

“It is important to note that it is up to a board of review to make the determination. The Scout’s level of activity should be discussed at the Scoutmaster conference, along with considerations of Scout spirit, and reasons why the Scout has not been more active. As a result, it is possible the Scout may decide that they are not ready for advancement, or perhaps that the Scoutmaster may support the Scout’s view that they should be considered active in spite of unit expectations. Regardless, the Scoutmaster does not have the authority to hold back a candidate for rank advancement. There is no requirement that a Scoutmaster conference must be ‘passed.’”

Editor’s Note

Editor Note: This article referenced was written before girls were introduced into Scouting programs. Therefore, minor modifications to the original article have been made to reflect gender references. The terminology ScoutsBSA has been substituted for all references to Boy Scouts.

Additionally, please note that the current *Guide to Advancement* has additional guidelines that further explain this requirement. (GTA, Topic 4.2.3.1 regarding active participation)

Helpful Links

The most current materials of interest for Scouters who are involved in the administration of advancement are located in one handy place. Many resources are available via the Advancement Resources page at www.scouting.org/Advancement

Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook (updated February 5, 2021)

The entry for the Eagle Scout Service project Workbook includes an effective introduction to the Eagle Scout project that will assist the Life Scout on his path. Consider sharing it with those youth who are starting this new Scouting undertaking.

“Congratulations on earning the rank of Life Scout. You are among approximately 55,000 youth who year after year, achieve that important milestone. As you ponder the meaning behind the Life patch, you are encouraged to think about the symbol of the heart. Historically in Scouting, it was a fitting symbol of health and fitness, but it also represents the spirit of caring and giving that is behind the Eagle Scout service project.”

“Service to other people is what Scouting is all about. In many ways, your service project reflects who you are as a youth leader. Your result should be of significant impact in your community to be special, and should represent your very best effort.”

“Your proposal, the logical first step, should emphasize your intention to give leadership to others through proper planning and development. Communicate with the beneficiary often to ensure the project meets the organization’s needs once it is completed.”

“We encourage you to seek guidance from your unit leader and project coach as you need help. Your *Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook*, much like a compass, will help navigate your way to a life of service as a proud Eagle Scout.”



<https://www.scouting.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/EagleProjectWorkbook2021c-v2.pdf>