



# TROOP FIVE

BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA  
BRONXVILLE, N.Y.

## **ADVANCEMENT GUIDELINES FOR THE BOARD OF REVIEW & SCOUTMASTER CONFERENCE**

We often say in Scouting that a badge of rank is a sign of what you *can* do, and not what you once did. Troop Five maintains high standards for rank advancement tempered by an encouraging group of adults that make up a body known as the Board of Review. The Board of Review is a subjective line of questioning that should evoke positive responses about the Scout's experiences and goals. Questions about his participation and role in the Troop's functioning should also be asked.

Immediately prior to the Board of Review, the Scoutmaster conference takes place. Here the Scout is tested on skills as outlined in the various sections below. Although the Scout may be examined by the same people on the same day, they are two separate events.

It is the purpose of this guide to inform Scouts, parents and the members of a Scoutmaster Conference and the Board of Review as to what the standards are for Boy Scout ranks from Scout to Eagle.

### **THE PROCESS:** What to do and when?

The basic rank requirements from Joining through First Class are all in the Scout Handbook pg. 4-17. A Scout can work on any requirement, for any rank, in any order that he chooses. He can

also advance more than one rank at a time if he is able but the ranks must be earned in order. There is no tenure requirement for Tenderfoot through First Class with the exception of the 30 day physical exercise requirement for Tenderfoot.

The specific requirements for Tenderfoot, Second Class and First Class are on pages 14-16 in the handbook. The Scoutmaster or a *registered* Assistant Scoutmaster must sign each line. A father may sign for their son if he is a registered leader. The process of becoming a registered leader is no more complicated than filling out a form. Needless to say, we encourage adult participation.

Proper judgment should be used at the time of signing. Skill requirements are not signed off unless we are sure that the boy knows the skill well enough that he could perform it at a later date by himself. Better yet, does he practice and know the skill well enough that he could instruct it to another Scout? We tell them "If you don't use it, you lose it." and one should realize that not only will the boy will be retested at the Board of Review, but he may be learning a skill that he could need later, or that may save a life.

Boards of Review are held three time a year for all ranks in September, January and June with a Court of Honor following within two weeks. (A Board of Review can be held at the end of summer camp at Yawgoog, but only for Joining, Tenderfoot and Second Class). The Scoutmaster and the advancement committee must approve each boy before he meets with the board. This is accomplished in the formal "Scoutmaster's Conference" requirement as described in the book.

While it is the policy of the BSA not to rush a boy through the advancement process, it is recommended that each Scout try to make First Class within twelve months of joining. There are several reasons for this seemingly contradictory policy. First, the requirements for all ranks up to First Class involve basic skills and preparedness that are almost a "license to learn" the truly involved things that will be required for the higher ranks: Star, Life and Eagle. When a Boy has learned all that he must know for First Class, we can have a greater degree of confidence that he can handle himself and perhaps others in the outdoors or in an emergency situation at home or in the community. The second reason the BSA encourages First Class in twelve months is that statistics show that boys who make it stay with the program longer. The longer that they stay, the more they learn.

Two of the hidden agendas to Scouting are for boys to learn both self reliance and leadership. When the older boys stay on it is because they want to run the Troop and have grown into a leadership position. *It is only from leading others that the senior ranks can be attained.* The benefits that Scouting can bring later in life come from the skills learned in leadership and teamwork at this level.



## **MERIT BADGES**

Merit badges are symbols of special skills learned and can be earned at any time after joining. They are learned with the guidance of an adult called a “Merit Badge Counselor” who has an expertise or an interest in a particular field. There are over one hundred different merit badges, from Agribusiness to Woodwork, including twelve required ones that must be earned on the road to Eagle.

Merit badges are not approved by the Board of Review but are awarded at a Court of Honor along with badges of rank. The board can ask any questions it likes about how the badge was earned, however.

The first step in earning a badge after selection is to obtain a signed “blue card” from an adult leader. Each boy should buddy up, purchase the proper Merit Badge Book and contact the appropriate counselor before starting work on the badge. Work done before contacting the counselor will probably count but it is up to the counselor alone to pass each Scout on his badge. The basic guideline for a merit badge counselor’s approval is that the boys should do no more, or no less than the requirements shown in the merit badge book.

One of the best ways to earn merit badges is at Boy Scout summer camp. A wide variety of skill groups are offered in a fun-filled concentrated period. The Durland Scout Center is a aquatic oriented high quality (and under-utilized) facility in Rye that offers numerous badges and skill training including swimming, lifesaving small boat sailing and much more.

If you are interested in becoming a Merit Badge Counselor, look in the back of the Scout Handbook for a listing and brief description of each badge. You may find it to be a wonderful way to share your special interest or hobby with your son or another boy that will carry on through the rest of his life.



## **RANK REQUIREMENTS**

While all of the basic requirements are listed in the handbook, a lot of room is purposely left for interpretation. It is the purpose of this section to make clear what we expect and how Troop Five has come to interpret the subjective. Please remember: the advancement process and the Board of Review is meant to be an encouraging process. If for some reason the board feels that a Scout is not ready, it becomes their task to make him feel good about what he has done up to that point, and to encourage him to keep going forward.

We want parents to sit on the Board of Review. No prior Scouting experience is necessary; just read the requirements in the handbook. There are three to six adults on each board with at least one with previous board service.

When you are finished talking to the candidate, after the Scoutmaster Conference, (and again after the Board of Review), ask him to wait outside while you discuss his advancement even if it is obvious that he has passed or failed. He will feel a lot better about himself if you call him back in after discussion as opposed to it seeming like it was “in the bag”.

The following are standards set by the Boy Scouts of America and Troop Five, Bronxville for use by the Board of Review, Scouts and parents in determining the qualifications in obtaining rank advancement. There are not a fixed number of questions for Tenderfoot, Second and First Class that a candidate must answer as is the case for the higher ranks. It will be readily apparent to you if the Scout knows his stuff or not.

## **GUIDELINES BY RANK**

### **SCOUT**

See Page 4 in the Handbook

A boy is not required to appear before the board to obtain the joining or Scout badge unless he wants to. The board should use his appearance as more of a welcoming process and not expect more than a lot of enthusiasm.

A boy crossing over from the Cub Scouts with the Arrow of Light is entitled to wear the badge on his uniform immediately if a Court of Honor is not immanent.



## **TENDERFOOT**

See Page 14 in the Handbook

The rank of Tenderfoot is one of first achievement. At this point, the Scout has begun to take an active part in the troop's activities, and has been on at least one tent camping trip, (not cabin camping). He should know the Oath, Law, Motto and Slogan by heart and take them seriously. Some coaching is permissible since nervousness leads to memory loss at this early stage.

The exercises are a matter of self discipline as well as physical fitness. Be sure that the exercises have at the very least been started and will be finished - Scout's Honor! We allow this 30 day exercise period to continue past the date of the Board of Review as long as it is well under way and we have assurances of its completion.

Have the candidate demonstrate the knots and discuss with him in detail all of the requirements. Be encouraging and remember that the candidate is *expecting* to be retested. Many boys have walked away from the Tenderfoot board saying that it was too easy. They have worked hard and want to be challenged. Above all, be sure that when he leaves the board that he is feeling good about himself and the process.



## **SECOND CLASS**

See page 15 in the Handbook

Second Class is a recognition of participation, principally in camping activities. While the Scout may not yet be highly proficient in all outdoor skills at this level, he has taken part in enough of the program that he is now a *contributor*.

There are not many of the camping skills that can be demonstrated indoors for the Board of Review, so do not be afraid to probe. A great deal can be learned simply by asking “ how, when and where ” he performed the task.

Second Class Scouts are also learning to reach out and learn to become part of their community. Ask about their service project and if they have a plan for their next one. It will keep them thinking.

Spend ample time on the first aid requirements, and be sure that his understanding is thorough. First aid is a very important part of the Scouting program. (Did you know that two percent of all Scouts will one day save a life with skills learned at this stage)?



## **FIRST CLASS**

See page 16 in the Handbook

First Class is a serious rank and a real achievement. First Class means proficiency in camping skills and the ability to operate independently *and* as a patrol member in the outdoors. It is learning to work with others and the satisfaction gained in achieving the skills necessary to “survive” outdoors that is at the heart of Scouting.

A First Class Scout should be proficient in all of the skills for Tenderfoot, Second *and* First Class. Ask detailed questions and have him demonstrate first aid in bandaging and emergency action in the event of a life threatening case.

Have him demonstrate all knots and lashings. If you are not familiar with them, fear not, someone in the room will be, so ask for help.

The basic key to attaining First Class rank is knowledge of the skills and lore of Scouting and something called Scout Spirit. Scout Spirit is defined as living the Scout Oath and Law in your daily life, as well as participation and enthusiasm for the program.

A good First Class Scout has the skills and willingness to be an active member of his patrol. Many boys are happy to remain a First Class Scout for years as the next three ranks require leadership and more responsibility for running the Troop. It can be the board of review that helps to inspire a boy to continue to climb higher.

## **THE SENIOR RANKS**

There are a series of one hundred questions at the back of this booklet pertaining to Scout skills and lore. All of the questions can be found in the Scout handbook and are clearly referenced by page number. It is expected, that the Scout has by this time, made ample use of the handbook and will know more than just what is required for a First Class Scout. The Scoutmaster Conference is expected to ask these questions when meeting with the candidate.

Each candidate is given a copy of the questions well before the Scoutmaster Conference so that he can brush up. We want the boys to know the skills and have the information; we are not trying to trip them up.

Beginning with the senior ranks, active leadership is the most important requirement for advancement and becomes more so from Star to Life to Eagle. Merely holding a position and wearing the patch will not count, period. It is possible, for Star and Life ranks, to take part in a special leadership project to help the Troop as a substitute for an elected or appointed position. An Eagle Scout must hold and act in a leadership position in the Troop.

Question the Scout carefully on their role in leadership and service.

### **STAR SCOUT**

See page 594 in the Handbook

Star Scout is the first of the senior ranks. The requirements also include the completion of six merit badges. Four of the merit badges must be from the list of eleven required badges ( 12 will be



required after Sept. 1994 ). There is no order in which merit badges must be completed.

The tenure requirement is four months as a First Class Scout and four months in a position of leadership.

You should ask twenty questions from the list provided at the back of this booklet. Only three totally wrong answers are permitted. (Use your judgment, some leniency is permitted), Spread out the questions among the board members and among the different categories. Try to vary the degree of difficulty and assume that not every boy can do an “eye splice” but that he should know the difference between a square and diagonal lashing, and be able to do them.

Spend time questioning on his service project or projects. Volunteer time can add up to the six hour minimum as long as it is approved.

Since at this stage the Scout is just beginning to grow into a leadership role, ask him what he has done and what his plans are for the next six months or year. Ask if he has enjoyed his role and if he would like to expand his position or try another. This will get him thinking and that’s what we want at this stage.

## **LIFE SCOUT**

See pages 594-5 in the Handbook

Eleven merit badges are required for Life Scout with a total of seven from the Eagle required list.

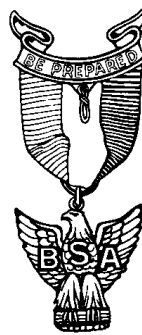
The tenure requirement is six months as a Star Scout and six months in a position of leadership.

The questions at the back of this booklet for the Scoutmaster Conference section serve the same purpose as they did for Star. You now will ask forty questions and should receive no more than five totally wrong answers. (Use your judgment, *some* leniency is permitted), Do not be afraid to probe if you are not getting the answer you want. He may know more than he is able to express without a little jostling.

During the Board of Review process, ask questions of the Scout as to how he has been an active leader of the Troop or has taken responsibility for helping other members of his Troop, Patrol or Cub Den. The list of qualifying positions are in the book under Star Scout but here again a special approved project to help the Troop will count.

Remind the Scout that there is a big jump from Life to Eagle and that more will be expected of him in the coming year than just earning merit badges and learning to do that “eye splice”.

## **EAGLE SCOUT**



See pages 595-6

Eagle is not a rank that is given because the candidate has gone through all of the motions and had his “ticket punched” at every requirement. It *is* a big deal and is not to be given with the expectation that the boy will then grow into the highest honor that Scouting can bestow. Giving an unqualified person the recognition that the Eagle represents only lessens its importance for others who follow.

The tenure requirements for Eagle are six months as a Life Scout and six months in a position of leadership. The list of qualifying positions is on page 596. A special leadership project will not count. It is expected that the candidate has been an integral part of the functioning and leadership of the Troop. It is also expected that the candidate will continue in this role. The BSA’s object is not to manufacture Eagle Scouts and then have them disappear from the organization.

In all, twenty one merit badges must be completed, with twelve from the list of Eagle required.

For the Scoutmaster Conference, all one hundred questions at the back of this booklet are to be asked. Only five totally wrong answers are permitted. (Again, use your judgment, *some* leniency is permitted).

The Board of Review will consist of not less than three but no more than six adults. The Scout Council of Westchester-Puntam County must be represented on the board.

The Scouts leadership project must have been approved by our local council, Committee Chairman and Scoutmaster before it was started. The key to the project is *leading others*. Whether or not the project itself was spectacular in nature is unimportant. The Scout is not to have done the work all by himself even if was a great unselfish feat. Probe in this area. It is the critical part of the project. We will hopefully have a representative from the council to oversee the Board. His or her questions will probe the project carefully.

The boy in front of the Eagle Board of Review has literally worked for years to get to this point. Think carefully, and do what you believe to be right. Remember that it may sometimes be the best thing for the boy to ask him to reappear before the board if he is not prepared. He has been learning lessons of incalculable value up to this point. Don't lessen them by being overly lenient *or* disallowing.