

## **Troop 28 Star/Life/Eagle Rank Advancement Clarifications**

### **Introduction**

The Star, Life, and Eagle ranks all have similar requirements (briefly stated):

1. Active in previous rank for a specific period (4, 6, or 6 months for Star, Life, and Eagle, respectively)
2. Demonstration of Scout Spirit
3. A specific number of merit badges (Eagle required and elective)
4. While in the previous rank, serve in a leadership position (for 4, 6, or 6 months). For Star and Life ranks, a Scoutmaster-assigned leadership project to help the troop can be performed.
5. For Eagle, plan, develop, and give leadership to others in a service project.
6. Take part in a Scoutmaster conference
7. Complete a board of review

Each of these requires further clarification:

### **Active in previous rank**

Being active in Troop 28 has traditionally been based on campout participation since we do not keep attendance at troop meetings. The guidelines have been that for Star, a Scout must have been on 60% of the campouts during **any** four month period while a First Class Scout. For Life or Eagle, it is 50%.

In simple terms, in order for a Scout to obtain the Star rank at four months after receiving the First Class rank, the Scout will need to have gone on 3 of the 4 monthly campouts. Going on one or two campouts in a four month period will not qualify as being active for the Star rank. Other activities that can qualify in the active formula include Order of the Arrow campouts, patrol campouts, troop lock-ins, etc. If a campout is cancelled, the Scout will need to participate in a later activity to make up for the missed time (we've cancelled only two campouts in my eight years with Troop 28). To further clarify, the overall level of active participation must occur within the 4 or 6 month period, depending on the Rank, but not necessarily immediately after earning the prior rank. As an example, a Scout may have become a First Class scout in January. If he missed the February and March campouts but was able to attend the April campout, June campout and summer camp in July, then he would qualify as active. That is because from April through July, he attended three outings within 4 months. One can use any 4 month period to qualify as active, not just that period that falls immediately after receiving the previous rank. If going on a high adventure trip, a scout could also include any outing intended to prepare that scout for the trip as an activity.

Unlike the requirements for lower ranks, this requirement can only be worked on as soon as the Board of Review for the previous rank is

completed. Parents: please do not push your son to complete his rank when your son has not met the guidelines for being active in the troop. Instead, push them to be more active by going on more campouts. In order to be signed off, the Scout should present a list of the campouts they participated on within a four (or six) month contiguous period at the Scoutmaster Conference and at the Board of Review. The Scoutmaster also keeps a list of participants for every campout which will be used to verify active participation.

### **Demonstrate Scout Spirit**

This should require little interpretation. To promote improved Scouting spirit in the troop, I have asked that this requirement only be signed off by the Scoutmaster or a Senior Assistant Scoutmaster as they generally have been more involved in troop activities to review this requirement with the Scout. The signoff may be delegated by the Scoutmaster to the Senior Patrol Leader to help Scouts show better respect to their SPL. Scouting Spirit emphasizes being involved in activities, attending troop meetings, participation in service projects, willingness to volunteer to help at day camps and evidence that the Scout helps others at church or school. Scout spirit would be what someone would notice about the Scout when he thinks no one else is watching!

### **Merit badges**

The list of Eagle required merit badges are listed with the Eagle rank requirements in the Scout handbook. A signed blue card is all the evidence required to show the merit badge has been completed. If the blue card is lost, the Scout will have to check with the advancement chairperson or the merit badge counselor for a replacement. The card received with the merit badge can also be used. All should be kept by the Scout in a 9-pocket card holder which can be reviewed by the Assistant Scoutmaster signing off on the requirement. It is the Scout's responsibility to keep up with his blue cards, not the responsibility of the troop's Advancement Chairman. The scout should always keep in mind that his portion of the blue card is his only real proof that he earned a particular merit badge. No matter what else happens, if he has the blue card, he has proof that he earned the merit badge!

This is the only requirement that can be worked on prior to being the next lower rank. It is acceptable that a Scout, Tenderfoot, or Second Class earn merit badges towards their Star, Life, or Eagle ranks. However, the main focus should be on the next rank they are trying to achieve!

### **Leadership Position**

The leadership positions which qualify are listed in the Scout handbook. Notably, an assistant patrol leader is not a qualifying position. In Troop

28, the adult mentor for the leadership position should sign off on this requirement. Each of the troop leadership positions has a mentor which is made known to the scout when he acquires a new leadership position. When there is no active adult mentor for the position, then the Scoutmaster signs off. In general, the Scout needs to attend leadership training for that position and be active in the role while they are at the previous rank. Leadership at a lower rank does not count. A Scout may have been a patrol leader for 5 months as Second Class and one month as First Class. For meet the Star rank requirement, they would need to take on another leadership role for the remaining three months. The four months (six for Life or Eagle) do not need to be contiguous nor for the same position. Again, the clock starts at the Board of Review date for the previous rank. In Troop 28, leadership positions generally change every 6 months (in coincidence with the Senior Patrol Leader election process). Scouts must re-sign up for their positions or sign up for a different position every 6 months. Again, it is expected that the scout attend Troop Junior Leader Training each time he signs up for a leadership position! Announcements are made well in advance of this training being held but expect this training to occur within 30 days of new leadership position sign-ups and selections. Check the most recent troop roster to be sure the Scout's position is listed correctly. We are working hard to get these out more often and I will attempt to make sure the position updates are distributed as quickly as possible after each term.

Being active in a position follows similar guidelines as the first requirement. For many of the leadership positions, the leadership is demonstrated in a campout setting. For the following positions, the Scout must have participated in 60% of the campouts in which they were in the position: Patrol Leader, Assistant Senior Patrol Leader, Senior Patrol Leader, Troop Guide, Quartermaster, Bugler, or Chaplain's Aide. If a scout with one of these leadership positions is not attending outings, he cannot be fulfilling the responsibilities of that leadership position. Those responsibilities are lined out for the scout on paper which he receives shortly after being selected to fill the position. For the other leadership positions, the adult mentor will work with the Scout to determine what "active" means.

A leadership project may also be assigned by the Scoutmaster instead of having a particular troop position. The project must help the troop and be of sufficient nature that it takes the place of a four or six month term of office

### **Eagle Service Project**

(For Eagle rank) There are great resources on the web to provide more detail for this requirement. The project must be signed off before the Scout's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. The project can be performed as soon as the Scout reaches the Life rank and does not need to be the last requirement (or

almost last) requirement prior to the Scoutmaster Conference. There are several Eagle Coach Counselors listed on the troop roster which are available for the Life Scout to work with through the Eagle process.

### **Scoutmaster Conference**

In Troop 28, the Star and Life conference is generally performed by specific Assistant Scoutmasters as listed on the most current troop roster. The reason the Scoutmaster does not generally do these is **not** because the Scoutmaster does not want to or has too much to do. One of the eight methods used within the Scouting program is adult interaction with scouts. This is a great opportunity for the boy to interact with other adults other than the Scoutmaster. This also builds in some consistency with the Star/Life advancement process as the Troop actually has several designated Assistant Scoutmasters who actually perform all of the Star/Life conferences.

This conference is arranged by the Scout (**not** parent) and can (and generally does) occur outside of the troop meeting. The Scout should be sure that all the other requirements as listed above are complete before arranging for the conference. It does no one any good to find out that the requirements are not complete during the conference. Ted Luke has an excellent letter that he uses as part of his conferences to help make sure the requirements have been completed. It is too difficult to determine the activity level or active leadership participation during the Scoutmaster conference; this must be determined ahead of time. Again, the Scoutmaster will sign off on active participation requirement and the mentor assigned for a specific leadership position will sign off on the leadership requirement.

Eagle Scoutmaster Conferences are performed by the Scoutmaster except on rare occasions (e.g. vacation, illness, or Scoutmaster's son). These are arranged outside of troop meetings as they last about an hour. The Eagle Scoutmaster conference is the last requirement that must be performed before the Eagle candidate's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Unless otherwise approved by the Scoutmaster doing the conference, it is expected that the Scout will be in full uniform including Scout pants, class "A", socks, appropriate shoes, and belt.

### **Board of Review**

According to the Scoutmaster Handbook, the purpose of the board of review is "to ensure that he has completed all of the requirements, to determine the quality of his troop experience, and to encourage him to advance toward his next rank." While we cannot retest on the requirements, the board should make sure the requirements have been completed as outlined above. An unfortunate but potential scenario is for

an (Assistant) Scoutmaster to sign off on the Scoutmaster conference only for the board to determine that the requirements have not been completed. This can only be avoided by: (1) the Scout making sure they have completed all the requirements, (2) the parent making sure the Scout has completed all of the requirements (prior to pushing the Scout to complete the board), and (3) the (Assistant) Scoutmaster conferring with the leadership mentors and camping records to make sure all records are accurate. If there is a discrepancy, the board will inform the Scout what is needed to complete the board or will take action to correct the erroneous records (if applicable). For Star and Life, a signed handbook denotes officially that the Scout has completed the rank and the Board of Review date is the date the Scout achieved the rank.

Eagle Boards of Review can occur after the Eagle Candidate's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday (with certain limitations). Please know however that the Scout must complete all requirements for the rank of Eagle before his 18th birthday! The Board can happen after his 18th birthday but the Scout must meet the requirements prior to his 18th birthday. The Board will sign and date the Eagle Application which must be approved by the National Office. The Eagle Candidate is not an Eagle Scout until approved by National but once approved will have been an Eagle Scout as of the Board of Review date.

For any Board of Review, a Scout is expected to be in full and complete uniform including Scout pants, class "A", belt, socks, appropriate shoes, merit badge sash, neckerchief, and neckerchief slide.

### **General Comments**

It is not our goal to set hard and fast rules for advancements. These are the guidelines which have been utilized by Troop 28 since before any of us were around and they are good guidelines. We've had a lot of Eagle Scouts come through this troop under these guidelines who were proud of what they accomplished. We want future Eagle Scouts to also feel proud about what they accomplish and their journey to get there.

A Scout's advancement is the responsibility of the Scout! Parents are encouraged to be active with the troop and to encourage their son along the advancement trail! Parents are to be discouraged from doing the work the Scout should be doing for himself. To do otherwise takes away the opportunity for the Scout to really feel great about what he has accomplished! When we do things for the Scout, we are depriving them of a life lesson and learning opportunity.

As has been mentioned before, it should not be a race to get to Eagle. That is not what it is all about. We'd rather see Scouts achieve their ranks in a little longer time than the minimal time as they will enjoy the trip better

(but naturally we want every Scout to reach Eagle before it is too late).  
Truly, it is about the journey, not the destination!!!