

# The Life to Eagle Guide



A guide to Eagle Scout candidates.

This guide is an aid to the prospective Eagle Scout and his parents for use in completing the Eagle Scout Rank Advancement. Because each Scout is an individual, every trail to advancement will differ. An attempt is made to cover all the highpoints so that nothing critical is missed. The Scout should work closely with his Eagle Coach (hereafter just 'Coach') in all matters. The Coach may be a person appointed by the Council or District, the unit committee or may be the Scoutmaster or an assistant. The Coach's responsibility is to be a resource to the Scout.

The first section of this guide is an outline of "The Steps to Eagle Scout." This section gives a quick general overview of the process. The following 'detail' sections expand upon some of the more difficult steps such as the "Eagle Project", the "Eagle Notebook", and the "Eagle Scout Application." While these detail sections give some common guidelines and helpful hints, be sure to use the resources at your Troop and District level. Your Coach, Scoutmaster and Unit Commissioner, as well as the District Advancement Committee representatives, can all give you excellent advice.

Every effort is made to keep this guide up-to-date. But it is not an official BSA or Council document. Be sure that you work with your District and Council Advancement committees to be sure that you are following current guidelines for your area. The suggestions in this guide are one way to work toward the Eagle Rank. *It is necessary to caution everyone involved in the advancement process that you CANNOT require the Scout to do more than is required by the Boy Scout Handbook, the Service Project Workbook, or the Eagle Application.*

Corrections and suggestions are graciously welcomed. Contact: [bobfries@verizon.net](mailto:bobfries@verizon.net)

# The Life to Eagle Guide

## Section 1 - The Steps to Eagle Scout

1. Either just before or soon after achieving Life Rank, the Scout and at least one of his parents should meet with the Coach to receive and review these steps and receive personal counseling about attaining the Eagle rank. The Coach will provide three items that comprise the Life to Eagle packet. An 'Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook', and the 'Eagle Scout Rank Application', and this document.
2. If the scout is not already Life Rank, he first earns Life. (*Note that the Scout cannot initiate his Eagle Scout Project until he is a Life Scout.*)
3. While earning the merit badges and doing the leadership required, the Scout should start the planning for a service project. The Scout may already have an idea for a project. If he doesn't, the Scout should review available lists of project sources. Many such lists are available. The Coach probably has at least one. He needs to find ideas that appeal to him. He can also try to come up with ideas on his own that would "fit the bill." If inspiration is lacking, he should discuss matters with his Coach. Other resources for ideas: the Internet and Eagles in his Troop or neighborhood. (See the detail section for the Eagle Service Project.)
4. After the service project is complete and all other requirements are done, the Scout will need to complete the remaining items on the Eagle Scout Rank Application form. The current form should be downloaded from the NESA website and is a PDF file with form fields that can be filled in. The result is a printout that is easily read. The Scout should carefully read the entire application form, and if he has any questions, discuss them with the Coach.
5. Either alone or with the assistance of a parent or the Coach, the Scout fills out a first draft of the application form. In order to do this, he will need access to his Scout records. It is required that the application data match the information as recorded in the Online Advancement system. This will need to be provided by the Advancement Chairman in the unit. *One of the most critical items to fill out first is the list of names, addresses and phone numbers for references; this list should be provided to the Coach as soon as possible, as it very commonly takes weeks to get responses from everyone.* [Note: The Coach or Advancement Chairman is responsible for contacting the Scout's references and soliciting letters of reference for the Scout. However, if time is tight, he/she may use email or ask the Scout to hand-deliver the reference requests directly to the references. Reference letters are sent to the Coach, not the Scout.]
6. Should the Scout find any discrepancies in his records and the Advancement Report from the online system, he needs to coordinate with the Advancement Chairman to correct the data. [Note - many Troops now use computerized advancement tracking. These are NOT always in sync with the online system and are not to be used for verifying the data.] Every rank and merit badge must be confirmed, both that it is there and that the listed date is correct. If the data in the online system is wrong, the Advancement Chairman will need to correct it. All discrepancies should be carefully reconciled on the application form - and if there were any errors, a new draft should be printed out.

7. Completion of Requirement #6: The Scout writes in his own words, his: (a) Ambitions and Life Purpose Statement (b) his Scouting Achievements and (c) his Out-of-Scouting Achievements. These can be three separate documents. These are reviewed as part of the Scoutmaster's Conference and are available to the Board of Review.
8. The Scout collects and correlates all his Scouting records (Individual Scout Record, Rank Cards, Merit Badge Blue/ Cards, Scout Awards, Certificates, and Advancement Report photocopies) in presentation form. (see the Eagle Notebook section)
9. Finalize the Eagle Service Project Report by getting input from the Coach and making any recommended corrections. The Scouting records in item #8 and the Project Report are the foundation of the Eagle Notebook. While this is not a requirement, the notebook serves two purposes. 1. It provides information to the Board of Review, and 2. It is a lifetime keepsake for the Scout. A final copy of the Eagle Application Form (i.e., the original), is completed, signed and dated by the Scout, and is included in this Notebook. A sheet protector is a nice touch.
10. The Scout contacts his Scoutmaster and schedules a Scoutmaster's Conference for Eagle. Following the conference, the Scout has his Scoutmaster sign and date the Rank Application Form (Unit Approval) and also date the "Date Conference Was Held" section.
11. The Scout has the Troop's Committee Chairman sign and date the Rank Application Form (second signature line under Unit Approval.)
12. A copy of the completed and signed Eagle Scout Rank application form is submitted to the council for verification. The Advancement Chairman or Coach is responsible for this step. This may be done via email (scan as PDF or image), FAX or mail. See the Council Application Process document for details. Please allow 7-10 business days to verify all applications. **[NOTE: In our council this is a major change in process. For years the council approval has been done after the Board of Review. The council is now following the National policy that puts the approval prior to the Board. You may not schedule your Board of Review until you received notice from the council that the application is approved.]**
13. Once the Council has approved the application, you can schedule the Board of Review. Members should be selected and copies of the Eagle Application, Scouting Records, and Project Notebook should be made for each member of the Board. These copies must be available for evaluation by the board prior to the review. The Coach or Advancement Chairman should also have in hand, the reference letters that were requested in step #5.
14. The Scout does a final check of his uniform, and corrects any deficiencies. The Board of Review is a full uniform event. The Board of Review may refuse to proceed with the Board for a candidate that is not in a full Field Uniform. (Clean, pressed and properly worn)
15. The Scout participates in his Eagle Board of Review. If successful, the Board Chairman and the District Advancement Committee member will sign the Board of Review portion of the Eagle Application.
16. Following the Board of Review the Scout thanks the Board members, assists with cleanup and collects the photocopies and original of his notebook. The original signed application will be collected by the Advancement Chairman for forwarding to the Council.
17. The Scout and his parents begin planning the Court of Honor.

# The Life to Eagle Guide

## Section 2 - The Eagle Service Project

1. Once the Scout has an idea or two (or three), he needs to talk it over with the Coach. The Coach may give preliminary approval, or expand, modify or reject the idea. Note that if the project idea is approved, this meeting is the initial entry in the Scout's Eagle Project notebook (a journal or binder used keep notes and to keep track of time spent). The time spent on this meeting is recorded as planning time. All planning and/or work time subsequent to this point should be similarly recorded in the notebook.
2. Once he has received the preliminary approval of his idea from the Coach, the Scout schedules a visit with the benefiting organization to discuss the potential project. A parent MAY wish to attend, but this is better handled by the Scout, on his own. The representative of the organization may give preliminary approval, expand, modify or reject the idea. Maintain standard youth protection guidelines. If the proposed project idea is rejected outright, the "planning hours" to date are lost, and the Scout is back to #1 above.
3. If the Proposal is accepted by the benefitting group, it will be sign by their representative. The Scout also must acquire approval signatures from the following individuals: (A) The Unit Leader (Scoutmaster or Advisor); (B) The Unit Committee representative, and finally (C) A member of the District Advancement Committee. (in this order) The Scout should first call each of these individuals to set up formal appointments to review his proposal. Note that the names, addresses and phone numbers of the members of the District Advancement Committee are available from the Coach and usually on the district website. The Scout should be prepared to provide proof that he is a Life Scout.
4. Once all four signatures are received, the Scout initiates the formal project plan. The Eagle Scout Service Project Final Plan is part of the Workbook. The workbook outlines the required components of the project proposal.
  - Suggestions or revisions from your original proposal.
  - The Project Description and Benefit includes your project ideas, what group benefits from the project and description of those benefits.
  - Describe the present condition. Include photos
  - Break the project down into phases or tasks, and list them. Estimate hours needed for each task. Note any permits or permission needed.
  - List the materials, supplies and tools needed with quantities and estimated cost.
  - Show leadership by assigning tasks to individuals with required skills.
  - Describe special conditions and safety hazards you might face.
  - Provide contingency plans.
  - Describe how necessary funds will be provided or raised.
5. The Project Plan does not require approval, but the Scout may want to submit it to the Coach for a quick review. The Coach may make suggestions to make the plan a more easily executed project. It is appropriate for the representative of the benefitting organization to review the final plans before work begins. This can help avoid any confusion about details, and a refusal to approve the work because "this is not what we expected."
6. If Tour Plans or other permits are needed, the Scout must coordinate obtaining them. This may require the assistance of his parent(s), the Troop Committee, or the benefiting organization. Permits applications should be started as soon as possible, because the process is often lengthy.

7. Using the phase or task list, the Scout sets up a calendar of activities, including (where appropriate) ordering and delivery dates for materials, work dates, numbers of workers needed, supplies and tools needed, unusual or rental equipment needed (e.g., chainsaws, post-hole diggers, cargo vans or trucks, etc.), personal protection equipment needed, snacks and drinks needed, and bad weather policies. This is critical to the success of the project and demonstrates the ability to provide leadership.
8. The Scout solicits for volunteers in the Troop and/or among his non-Scouting friends and relatives. For activities which are forbidden to Scouts (e.g., chainsaw work, driving a rental truck) the Scout will need to recruit specific adult assistance. Flyers which summarize critical information (who, what, when, where, what to bring, what to wear, bad weather policy, solicitations for tools or other equipment) should be distributed well ahead of time by hand, mail, or email, and followed up to ensure adequate help for each work session. The Scout makes reminder calls to all volunteers 24 hours in advance of each work session.
9. If applicable, the Scout receives all permits to have on site during the work. All coordination of schedule, delivery and availability should be performed by the Scout before beginning work.
10. The Scout begins the project, following his detailed plans. He keeps records for each phase, including sign-in/sign-out sheets, receipts, and lots of photos. After each phase, he records information in his working notebook, and writes up a brief summary of what was done (and what went right or wrong in that phase.)
11. Following the last work phase, the Scout brings his project to "preliminary closure," and invites the authorized representative of the benefiting organization to review the work. Although uncommon, additional finishing work or a more thorough cleanup job may be requested of the Scout prior to approval. The work stage of the project is completed when this representative approves the project as complete. When this occurs, the Scout should present his Project Workbook "Completion Approvals" page for a signature by the representative. The Unit Leader must also approve and sign this form.
12. Once the project is completed, the Scout writes and distributes a general thank you letter to everyone who assisted. If specific individuals rendered unusually valuable assistance, they should receive individualized thank you letters. Receipts are tallied and where appropriate, paid off by the Scout, his Troop or the benefiting organization. Borrowed equipment is cleaned and returned, and broken equipment (if any) replaced. Leftover supplies (if any) can be given to the benefitting organization or donated to an appropriate group. Remaining funds raised for the project are to be turned over to the benefiting organization. If the project was completed ahead of schedule, be sure to notify any volunteers who signed up for the remaining scheduled sessions that they have been released from their commitments.
13. The Scout reviews his photos, and prints those which properly illustrate the work done during the project. Selected photos should show both Scouts working on the project and "before/after" illustrations.
14. The Scout takes his working notebook and types up his "Service Project Report" section which will summarize the project, note any changes from the plan, describe how leadership was demonstrated, and document how time and funds were spent. Photos should be attached with descriptive captions. Any related information that will help evaluating the project should be included.
15. The completed Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook with all signatures constitutes Requirement #5 of the Eagle Scout Rank Application Form. The total hours worked on the project, as well as a brief description are noted on the Eagle Application in the spaces provided.

# The Life to Eagle Guide

## Section 3 - The Eagle Notebook

The Eagle Notebook is the compiled and organized account of how the Scout advanced to the Eagle Rank. The main components are:

- The Eagle Service Project Notebook (the proposal and the report)
- The Ambitions and Life Purpose Statement
- The listing of Achievements in Scouting, community, church and school
- The Scouting Records.

The Service Project proposal and report are discussed at length elsewhere. The following are helpful hints on the rest of the items.

### **A) Ambitions and Life Purpose Statement**

Pretty much self-explanatory, but often a painful writing experience for many Scouts - and yes, it's to be composed by the Scout alone, *not by or with his parents!* The essence is simple - what do you plan to do with your future? What career choices interest you, and why? What colleges and majors are you considering, and why? What (non-professional, lifetime) hobbies or activities particularly interest you? What goals would you like to achieve in your lifetime? Without being overly pretentious, what role would you like to fill in America's (and the world's) future? These are questions most Eagle candidates haven't put a lot of thought into, yet, which often makes the entire exercise quite difficult. This is especially true of very young Eagle Scouts. This is also, of course, why this requirement is so valuable. Done thoughtfully and well, it helps focus a Scout on his future, and gives him at least the beginnings of a roadmap towards achieving his goals.

Many Scouts want to know how long the statement "has" to be. The answer is that there is no required length. It can be as short as one simple paragraph, or many pages long. Obviously, the more thought the Scout has put into it, the more useful it will be; both to the Scout and to the members of his Eagle Board.

Some thoughts: Some Scouts will fill up their statement with false objectives and goals which they think will impress their Eagle Boards - "I want to join the Peace Corps" (or Seminary, or become President, etc.) If you really want to do something like this, great! but don't try to falsely impress people. You will rapidly appear foolish under questioning by the members of the Board. Also, while a small amount of humor is not bad, the document is intended to be a serious look ahead, and not an exercise in comedy.

## **B) Achievements**

This section is a comprehensive listing of your activities and achievements both inside and outside of Scouting. Again, the intent is to present yourself "in total" to the Board of Review. The easiest way to do this is with systematic lists; the actual arrangement is up to the Scout, but anything will do so long as it's well organized and neatly presented.

- **In Scouting**

If you were involved in multiple Troops, you should start off with a list of those Troops, their locations, and the dates of your tenure with each. If everything was done with one Troop, a simple statement to that effect should be used as the lead-in.

Your data should include lists (including exact dates) of:

- a) Rank Advancements (Scout Rank through Life) in chronological order
- b) Merit Badges (preferably in chronological order)
- c) Other Scout Awards and Honors (Totin' Chip, Mile Swim, 50 Miler, Order of the Arrow, World Conservation, Most Active Scout, etc.);
- d) Leadership Positions Held (with dates of service)
- e) Long-term Campouts completed (Summer Camp, High Adventure treks, National or World Jamborees, etc.
- f) Training courses completed.
- g) Camp Staff positions held.
- h) Service Projects performed; this is optional.

Finally, note that some Scouts like to also include details of their Cub Scouting and Webelos careers. This is not required, but is a nice touch (and is certainly acceptable.)

- **Outside of Scouting**

Again, if you've moved around, you should start off with a list of where you lived and when. Next, list all the schools you attended, and when.

Your data should include lists of

- a) Scholastic Activities and Achievements;
- b) Athletic Activities and Achievements;
- c) Extracurricular Activities and Achievements (including Church and Community)
- d) Work Experience (both volunteer and paid.)

Again, arrange everything in each category chronologically. However, note that you can sum multiple-year activities; for example: Altar Server, St. Peter's Church, 2009 - 2011, or Garland High School Band, 2010 - Present.

## **C) Scout Records**

It is no longer necessary to have records for proof of advancement as all proof is maintained in the online advancement system. However, it is a good practice to advise new Scouts and his Parents to save all their Scout records - rank cards, merit badge cards, all Scout award certificates (Totin' Chip, 50 Miler, Mile Swim, Religious Awards, etc.). These signed and dated cards are part of your notebook. They are your memorabilia and your personal "Braggin' Rights" that you in fact earned all your awards. Save all your patches, certificates and cards. Work with your Advancement person if you do not have them all.

The easiest way to present your rank and merit badge cards is in the commonly available baseball card transparencies (which have 9 card slots.) Buy as many as you need to display all your cards. All your other awards should be similarly displayed either in the same baseball card type transparencies (for other cards) or full-page transparencies (for certificates.)

Include your online advancement records provided by the Troop Advancement Chairman.

Last up are your so-called "Individual Scout Records" - a listing of all your camping/activities record, that is, your personal history with the Troop. This is also available upon request from the Advancement Chairman, and again should be carefully checked for accuracy, and discrepancies noted for follow-up and correction. When you get a "final" version that has everything correct, have the Advancement Chairman sign it for inclusion in your notebook. This completes your Official Scout Records.

### **Putting it All in Order**

At this point, you've probably got paperwork everywhere. Yes, there is a general presentation format, as follows:

- Cover Page (optional but recommended)
- Eagle Scout Rank Application Form
- Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook
  - Note: Photos and Figures can be either incorporated directly into the text, or assembled in a single block at the end of the workbook, your choice.
- Completion/Thank You Letter from the Benefiting Organization
- "What I Learned" (optional, but highly desirable)
- Ambitions and Life Purpose Statement
- Achievements Summaries
  - In Scouts
  - Out of Scouts
- Individual Scout Records
- Rank Cards (in Order)
- Merit Badge Cards (Chronological Order)
- All Other Scout Awards (Cards, Certificates)

The Notebook is most easily assembled in a 3-ring binder. The binders with the plastic slip cover that allows the cover page to be inserted for display purposes is a great touch. Use a binder that is adequate for the material, but not so large that it is cumbersome. Make it look like it was planned.

# The Life to Eagle Guide

## Section 4 - The Eagle Rank Application Form

### General Comments and Instructions

The Eagle Rank Application Form is the official form needed to apply for Eagle Scout Rank, and essentially summarizes all your critical data. You will receive a copy of the form from your Coach, or it can be obtained at the Council Service Center, or downloaded from the internet. Ideally a scout would make photocopies of the form to use for draft practice. This is because getting everything right is both difficult and essential. Errors on this form are the primary reason for most rejections at the Council and National levels. You should not fill in the official copy until you have the practice copy "perfect"; this can take several drafts.

Practice copies can be handwritten, but if possible the official application should be typed. Copies of the form in PDF format now allow the text to be filled in on the computer prior to printing. This simplifies editing and provides a very nice looking document. This application form will be approved and signed by both your Council and National Executives, and is returned to you. It is a permanent keepsake of your Eagle Advancement. A good clean form with no errors or corrections will be appreciated later.

For the most part, the form is self-explanatory; however, there are some common pitfalls to avoid. First, you **MUST** enter all applicable dates. Second, you **MUST** use **EXACT DATES** (in month/day/year format) for all applicable dates; failure to properly enter dates will almost always result in a rejection. Other comments:

- (A) Although the form asks for your full name, most Scouts use middle initials versus middle names; however, the choice is yours.
- (B) On page 2, for Requirement #4 (Leadership position), your *start* date must be *no earlier than the day after your Life Board of Review*, even if you held that position long before you became a Life Scout. In addition, if you're still holding a listed leadership position heading into your Board of Review, list "Present" as your end date for that entry. Use only the positions noted in the list on the application. Positions that are not in the list will not qualify and will result in the application being rejected.
- (C) All signatures (and corresponding dates) on page 2 should be in ink.
- (D) Do not make any entries below the heading "BSA Local Council Certification"; these final entries are handled at official levels.

### Letters of Recommendation

Requirement #2 asks for the name, address, phone number and email address of six individuals who know you and can write letters of recommendation to the Board members regarding your candidacy. Providing this information on the Eagle Application just before the Board of Review is way too late in the game. You need to get this information to the Coach at least 6 weeks before the Board of Review. In turn, the Coach will write letters to these individuals soliciting letters of recommendation. You cannot do it yourself. The letters should be sent to the Coach, not the Eagle Scout candidate. The recommendations will be submitted to the Chairman of the Eagle Board just before the Board of Review. You should have letters from all of the references you list.

The Application Form formally lists 4 different references, and leaves the last two to you. The requested references are:

- (A) Your Parents
- (B) A religious reference
- (C) An educational reference
- (D) An employer reference.

Most Scouts use neighbors or relatives for their last two references. Some comments: It is always a good idea to contact everyone you intend to list to see if they're willing to provide a reference for you; most are more than willing, but every once in a while, someone will turn you down. This is rarely for any sinister reason, just that these people hate writing letters of recommendation for any reason, for anyone, and they know it. And again, whoever your "final" six are, make sure you relay the information to the Coach as soon as possible, and also enter the data onto your Eagle Application Form.

A note about the 'Employer' reference: "Employer" doesn't have to be a formal job - lawn mowing, yard-work, babysitting and even volunteer work all qualify. However, if there is no one that fits this description, you can omit this reference.

A note about the 'Religious' reference: This will usually be the Priest, Pastor or Rabbi of your church or Synagogue, or possibly the Youth Minister. If you do not have an affiliation with a religious organization, the parents, a spiritual counselor or guide, or someone with whom you share your convictions, can write this reference letter. Hopefully this is not the first time you have been told this; *A Scout must believe in God in order to attain the Eagle rank.* (Scouting does not dictate what faith you hold or what the name of your God can be)

### **The Merit Badge List - Comments and Cautions**

This is a source of major headache for many an unwary Scout. It is important to use exact dates for all entries, in month/day/year format. Second, even if you were a member of only one Troop during your entire career, you must still enter your Troop number for each merit badge. Third, you will note that Eagle Required Merit Badges numbers 6 and 9 have multiple options: #6 is Emergency Preparedness *or* Lifesaving, while #9 is Cycling *or* Hiking *or* Swimming. You can only use one of the available options, and neatly cross out (with a single line) whichever options you either never earned or are not using for that block. However - and this is critical and not at all obvious - if you *did* earn a merit badge which you crossed out, you may need to re-enter that badge in the "free" merit badge slots starting with #13. Thus, you could re-enter up to three "unused" Eagle Required Badges into the "free" merit badge slots. Next, fill all the remaining "free" merit badge slots with your non-Eagle required merit badges, *starting with the very first one you earned, and proceeding in chronological order.* Again (and another critical, non-obvious point), do *not* use merit badges out of chronological order in the "free" slots. Many Scouts who have earned far more than the minimum 21 merit badges want to list more "impressive" merit badges earned later in their careers – this can result in a rejection.

OK, why? The reason will require a brief explanation of the Boy Scout advancement program. There are two issues, both rather subtle. First, advancement to Star rank requires 6 merit badges, of which 4 must be Eagle required. The date of your Star Board of Review is listed on the top of page one. *If you do not have at least 6 merit badges listed (with 4 of them being Eagle Required) with dates before your Star Board of Review, your application will be rejected!* Similarly, Life Rank requires 11 merit badges, of which 7 have to have been Eagle Required, and the same type scenario applies with respect to your Life Board of Review. This is why exact dating is required for all ranks and merit badges, and also why you need to follow the protocol detailed in the previous paragraph.

The second issue is a little more obscure. Two of the Eagle Required badges have other Eagle Required badges as *mandatory pre-requisites*, that is, you must have completed Swimming *before* you could take Lifesaving, and you must have completed First Aid *before* you could take Emergency Preparedness. The latter requirement isn't important in this context, because the First Aid merit badge is not an optional one. However, Swimming is an optional Eagle Required Badge, so if Lifesaving is used for #6, Swimming must be used for #9 or as a "free" merit badge. If it's not there, again, *your application will be rejected*.

[In an even more obscure problem, some applications are "bounced" because the listed dates for the Swimming or First Aid merit badges are *after* Lifesaving or Emergency Preparedness, respectively. Most of the time, this is just a mis-entered date, and is easily fixed; in other cases, however, the listed dates are accurate, and indicate that the Scout and Merit Badge Counselor failed to ensure that the pre-requisite merit badge had been earned. This (fortunately rare) occurrence can only be addressed by the District and Council Advancement Committees.]

Failure to pay very close attention to your rank and merit badge dates causes more rejections of Eagle Scout applications than all other problems combined. Now you know why.

# The Life to Eagle Guide

## Section 5 - The Review Process

Once the Notebook is completely assembled, it is submitted to the Coach, Scoutmaster, Advancement Chairman, or another designated Committee member for review.

### Reviewing the Eagle Notebook

As mentioned before, the Eagle Notebook represents you "in total." For most of the members of your Eagle Board, this is your first "personal" introduction. There is a common expression, which applies perfectly to this situation: "You never get a second chance to make a first impression." This is why the Troop takes the time to carefully review your Notebook before it's submitted to the Eagle Board. The intent is *not* to rewrite your notebook, but rather to help you develop it into a top-quality presentation. Your reviewer will be looking for typographical, grammar and syntax errors, and plain bad writing. Initial submissions can vary from excellent to atrocious. In the first case, one quick review is all that's required; in the latter case, however, 3 or 4 markups may be needed before the notebook is satisfactory. Note that the same individual should perform all reviews of your notebook; that is, you should not be bounced from one person to the next for each successive review. One helpful hint - always submit the old, corrected version along with the new copy - this helps the reviewer concentrate on only the previous corrections, and saves a lot of time and aggravation.

Once a final version is approved, you'll need to make duplicates for all the Board of Review members. Also make one copy for the Scoutmaster. Photocopies of the book are fine. It is not necessary to have original prints for each person. When the copying is finished, reassemble the original in a presentation binder, using clear sheet protectors for each page. This gives the original a highly professional appearance and also helps preserve it for the future.

### The Scoutmaster's Conference

Yes, there is one last Scoutmaster's Conference, just like for all your other ranks. As you might expect, this one is "special," and has some intense discussion. Among the questions you should think about ahead of time are:

1. Go over your list of achievements in and out of Scouting and consider the highlights and critical points of your Scouting career. What events were significant to you and why?
2. Looking back on what was offered to you during your Scouting career, what do you regret not having done as a Scout? Why? Could you make up for these things in your remaining time in Scouts, or sometime in your future? What advice would you give other Scouts faced with the same choices?
3. What does Eagle Scout Rank *mean* to you? How does it fit into your future?
4. Do you ever see yourself as a volunteer Scout Leader some day? If not, why not? If so, what aspects of our program would you try to bring to your Troop? Why? What aspects would you *not* bring? Why? If you had one piece of advice to give regarding how our Troop is run, what would it be?

### Approval by Council

As mentioned earlier in this guide, a copy of the completed and signed Eagle Scout Rank application form is submitted to the council for verification. The Advancement Chairman or Coach is responsible for this step. This may be done via email (scan as PDF or image), FAX or mail. Details from the Council Application Process document are noted below. **[NOTE: In our council this is a major change in process. For years the council approval has been done after the Board of Review. The council is now following the National policy that puts the approval prior to the Board. You may not schedule your Board of Review until you received notice from the council that the application is approved.]**

## Excerpt from the Council Application Process document

5. 9.0.1.5 Submit to Council Service Center – The Eagle Scout Rank application form or a copy is submitted to the council for verification. It may be turned in at either office, faxed (Dallas Fax: 214-902-6789 & Fairview Fax: 214-509-2199) or scanned and emailed to 571.eagle@scouting.org. If emailed, the subject line should include the Unit (Troop, Team or Crew), unit number and district. The Central, East Central and Southwestern Service Areas will be handled by Donna Pytlak at the Dallas office and the Eastern and Northern Service Areas will be handled by the Fairview office. Please allow 7-10 business days to verify all application.

### **The Eagle Board of Review**

When you have been notified that the Eagle Rank Application has been approved by the Council office, you can schedule and hold the Eagle Board of Review. The review board consists of 3-6 members, one of whom must be a member of the District Advancement Committee. The remaining members can be just about any other reputable member of the community. Most Troops use other Troop Committee members, but some will add senior level volunteer Scouters (District Committee members or Assistant District Commissioners, etc.) or Adults from outside Scouting who can advise the scout on careers or colleges in which they have indicated an interest. The members of the board should understand the rank of Eagle and the purpose and importance of the review.

Note that active Scout Leaders (Scoutmaster and ASMs) in the Troop *cannot* participate in the Eagle Board of Review for a scout in their unit. Also, the parents of the scout cannot participate on the board and are not allowed in the room as spectators. Selection of the Board is the duty of the Advancement Chairman, Scoutmaster, or unit committee. The scout and the parents or guardians will have no part in selecting any board of review members.

In our district, the date of the Board is established by contacting the chairman of the District Advancement committee, who will arrange for a committee member to attend. The Scout and Scoutmaster or Advancement Chairman should submit two or three dates to the chairman. The dates will be offered to the committee members to who will volunteer to attend as they are able. Once the date, time and location are agreed on, the additional members of the board can be selected as available. Once the Board is constituted, one member is designated as the Chairman. The Chairman will be the person who will handle the protocol and paperwork at the actual Board. This is usually the Advancement Chairman, but he/she can designate a substitute. The chairman will also make sure the scout provides copies of the notebook.

In general, the Board will convene before about 30 minutes before the scheduled time of the review, in order to review the notebook and discuss Board protocol. The copies of the notebook and letters of recommendation need to be there early for the board members to have a chance to read them over.

The Scout should arrive at the agreed upon time, in impeccable full uniform, including merit badge sash. His parents may wish to also be present but must wait outside the room where the Board of Review is conducted. Upon invitation, the Scout is escorted into the Board by the Scoutmaster or Coach, and formally introduced to the Board members. Once the introduction is complete, the Scout is seated and the Scoutmaster/Coach and (if present) Parents leave the room. The Chairman initiates the Board of Review.

Most Boards last between 30 and 45 minutes. As previously detailed, a properly run Board rapidly moves past the issue of qualifying and instead concentrates on what being an Eagle Scout means, and then on the Scout's vision of his future. Done well, even a short Board of Review can give a Scout some invaluable advice and counsel.

At the conclusion of the Board, the Scout leaves the room while his candidacy is discussed and formally approved, or possibly disapproved. This usually takes an additional 5 to 10 minutes, while the Scout, Scoutmaster, Coach and Parents all fidget outside.

If approved, everyone present is invited back inside, and the Board members congratulate the Scout while the paperwork is signed. This is also the opportunity for a few good photos - Scout with Parents, Scout with Scoutmaster, Scout with Eagle Board, etc. The Scout should also take this opportunity to thank the members of the Board (and especially the District Representative) for their time and efforts on his behalf.

The Advancement Chairman will usually collect all the forms and the Eagle Notebooks. Most Scouts want to keep their original and at least one or two photocopies of their Notebook. This is fine, but make sure you keep the original copy in a very safe place. You will want to have it on display at your Eagle Court of Honor, and this is a "lifetime" heirloom for you and your family. It will be precious to you especially if you have Scouts of your own some day. The other photocopies are retained by the Troop - one for the Troop's permanent archives, and the rest as training guides for future Eagle candidates. This closes out the Board. And by the way, Congratulations!

*A brief discussion of what would occur if the board does not approve the Eagle candidate. This is very rare, but you should be aware of the process that is available to the Scout in this situation.*

*The Board that decides to not approve a candidate must have a very good reason for this rejection. The reasons for the rejection should be stated plainly and clearly. Further, the Board should lay out a remedy process with which the Scout can obtain the approval. The candidate can expect to have this information in writing in a reasonable time. The Eagle candidate now has three paths of action.*

- 1. He can accept the remedy requested and perform the tasks as quickly as possible. The Board can then review the new situation and act accordingly.*
- 2. He can choose to appeal the decision of the Board and request another Board to be convened. In this case the District Advancement Committee will assemble a new Board of impartial members and conduct an appeal review. If this Board arrives at the same conclusion, the appeal can be escalated to the Council and even the National level if needed.*
- 3. He can choose to abandon the whole process and just forget about getting the Eagle rank. This would be unthinkable to most Scouts that have persevered this far. Obviously this is extremely unlikely*

### **What's Next?**

The Advancement Chairman is usually in charge of getting the Eagle application to the Council office after entering the information in the Online Advancement system. In this case, that actual signed (original) form must be delivered. A scanned copy is not acceptable.

If you haven't already done so, you and your parents need to consider when you'd like to hold your Eagle Court of Honor. Be aware that there can be a time lag between the Board of Review and the actual final approval of your Eagle application at the National level. This lag is usually only about 10 days, but can be as longer.

All councils now use an "On-Line" submission of the Eagle application. This has reduced the approval time to about 2 weeks, instead of 2 months. However, it is still recommended that you allow adequate time for the paperwork to clear before scheduling your Court of Honor.

*The Troop cannot award you the Eagle Rank until the approval from National comes through.*

**Check with your Coach for further information on the Eagle Court of Honor.**