

ADVANCEMENT INFORMATION FOR SCOUTS

November 2023

I. RANK ADVANCEMENT

1. Scoutmaster Conferences (SMC)
 - a. For Scout, Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class ranks - please contact your PASM to schedule your scoutmaster conference once all other requirements are complete.
 - b. For Star and Life ranks - please contact Scoutmaster Dr. Jason Hou to schedule your SMC. They are usually scheduled during monthly campouts.

2. Boards of Review (BOR)
 - a. Once your SMC is complete, please complete the BOR Request Form on the troop website: <https://www.troop55htx.com/advancement/request-board-of-review/>
 - b. You will upload a PDF copy of your (physical) Scout Handbook pages in the form where it asks you to.
 - c. BOR are usually offered once a month before a troop meeting (see weekly newsletter) or can be completed at the monthly campouts.
 - d. BOR requests must be made **NO LATER** than **NOON** on the Wednesday prior to the campout and **8 PM** the prior Wednesday to the scheduled Tuesday BOR.
 - e. Once requested you will receive confirmation to attend the BOR for Thursday at 8pm (Campout) or by Friday at 8 PM (6:15 Tuesday BOR)
 - f. Once you complete your BOR you are automatically processed and will receive your rank award at the following Court of Honor (COH).

II. MERIT BADGES

1. Steps to begin/earn a MB
 - a. Scout approaches PASM to ask for a blue card **for a specific MB**.
 - b. PASM recommends name of **at least one registered MBC (Merit Badge Counselor) for that MB** and signs the FRONT of the card **OR logs the initial leader signature within Scoutbook** (this is what

we refer to as the initial signature).

- c. A Scout may begin working with a MBC. He may work with whomever he chooses so long as he verifies that the MBC is registered with BSA for that specific MB.
 - d. Some MBC may desire/require Scouts to connect with them via Scoutbook. If you need assistance with this please reach out.
 - e. Once all requirements are signed off by the MBC you are almost finished. The Scout returns to PASM for second unit leader signature.
 - i. The PASM is checking in with Scout about his MB experience
 - ii. Second leader signatures ARE NOT signed off (online) Scoutbook. The PASM physically signs the blue card or emails you an A-OK and you staple email to physical blue card.
 - f. Finally turn in your completed Blue Card to the Advancement.
 - i. During the School Year turn into the Advancement Help Desk available at Tuesday Meetings
 1. If the Tuesday meeting does not fit your MB timeline and you need to turn in the MB to Mrs. Oates mailbox please email laura.oates@me.com to arrange a time for placing the MB in her mailbox at 3867 Olympia Dr 77019.
 - ii. During the summer months Mrs. Oates mailbox is always open to receive MB blue cards, please email laura.oates@me.com when they are dropped off so confirmation can be sent once picked up.
2. MB Reminders
- a. PASM and MBC communications can occur via email. The Scout should print and attach those emails to the blue cards when submitting to advancement for processing.
 - b. If you are participating in virtual MB classes, please be sure to keep track of all names and contact addresses for the program(s) you are taking.
 - c. **ALWAYS** check to see if the MB class will cover ALL requirements. If you aren't sure, ask the program coordinator.
 - d. If the class DOES NOT cover all reqs, you will need to find a registered MBC willing to help you with the pre-reqs and/or incomplete items remaining after the class, BEFORE you begin the class. **NO EXCEPTIONS.**

- e. ALWAYS keep a copy/photo of any MB (materials/documents) until awards are processed. ESPECIALLY IF DROPPING IN A MAILBOX.
 - f. FINAL BLUE CARDS must be submitted via hard copies. NO ELECTRONIC SUBMISSIONS ARE ACCEPTED.
 - g. If you do not see your submitted items in your online Scoutbook profile, please feel free to follow up via email or ask at the Advancement Help Desk
3. Gigglin' Marlin
- a. As of February 1, 2022, NO MB will be accepted from Gigglin' Marlin

III. COMMUNICATION TIPS

1. YPT RULES-
- a. EMAIL: copy (CC) a parent or trusted adult or you will not be responded to
 - b. Telephone: A parent or trusted adult must be present for the whole conversation (Speaker Phone and Face Time work well)
 - c. Videoconferences: A parent or trusted adult must be present for the whole conversation.
2. Etiquette
- a. Use proper salutations in emails, identify yourself during a phone call
 - b. Be prepared for phone call/video conference with materials readily available
 - c. Ensure phone or computer device is working appropriately before contact (Microphone is on, Camera is on, Face is in view)
 - d. PARENTS- Emails from Scouts should be written by Scouts

IV. COURTS OF HONOR

1. Troop 55 holds four Courts of Honor a year. They are a formality in which we honor the Scouts for the achievement. We pass out rank advancements, earned merit badges, and special awards.
2. All Scouts are expected to attend/participate in COH even if not receiving awards.
3. Full Class A Uniform is REQUIRED for COH
4. No electronics are permitted during COH

5. See Troop Newsletter and online calendar for associated deadlines for each COH (Submission deadline is always 2 weeks prior to COH for processing time)
6. If a Scout has earned a rank advancement, MB, or award and cannot attend the associated COH they will be held and available at the Advancement Help Desk during scout meetings for two weeks. After this time physical awards will no longer be available.

V. CONFUSED? QUESTIONS? CONCERNS?

1. Please Call or Email Us!
 - a. We are here to help you succeed.
 - b. Remember we are volunteers as are PASMS, MBC, SM...etc we are doing our best to balance our own work, life, family, and Scouts
 - i. We give GRACE and expect in return when being communicated with.

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