

## New Parent Survival Guide

- ◇ Troop 31 is a wonderful place where your son can grow, learn, and be a boy and there are countless adults to help him reach the milestones required to reach the coveted prize of Eagle Scout. Parents play a vital role in this process as well and here are some tips, compiled by parents who have been through the march to Eagle with their sons, that we hope will make your life as a Boy Scout parent easier. While your son has to earn his merit badges and rank advancements, helping him to keep organized will ease the stress for both of you throughout the process.
- ◇ When your son joins Troop 31 get a notebook, file or whatever organizational tool is easiest for you to use. As your son advances in rank or earns merit badges, keep all the rank cards and any merit badge information your son receives in that notebook or file.
- ◇ We hold 3 Courts of Honor each year -- September, January and May. Have your son attend each one, if possible, even if he is not advancing or earning anything. Not only does this show support for his fellow scouts who are advancing or receiving merit badges, but he will benefit from seeing his peers advance. Sometimes this can be very motivating!
- ◇ SEND HIM TO CAMP BOXWELL!! Twice would be even better. Your scout can really crank out the merit badges there. When he gets home, BE SURE to discuss with your child what merit badges he took while there and confirm that Troop 31's Scoutmaster receives confirmation that these have been completed. Sometimes this information is lost in the mail! Scouts should be able to complete as many as 4 merit badges but you need to follow the paper trail to make sure he gets credit. If there are incompletes (which frequently happens), GET THE PAPERWORK so you can be sure the scout finishes this merit badge back with Troop 31.
- ◇ Watch your e-mail for information on troop activities such as campouts, climbing trips, ski trips and merit badge universities.
- ◇ Have your scout attend as many Eagle projects as he can in the beginning. Not only will this earn him his needed service hours, but it will give him exposure to what Eagle projects look like and the variety of them. This will help serve him later when he has to decide on his project.



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◇ Your scout should attend all merit badge universities he can work into his schedule. MBUs are great forums for completing merit badges quickly. Once again, follow up and BE SURE THE PAPERWORK is turned in and your scout gets credit.

◇ Follow your child's merit badge progress. Keep track of what he needs for Eagle, eagle-required merit badges as well as non-eagle required. The merit badge counselors of Troop 31 are very supportive and eager to help the scouts complete their merit badges. Most are willing to meet outside of Troop meetings so if your son is missing just a few requirements, he should contact the counselor and schedule a special meeting to get it finished.

◇ Keep a record of all the camping nights your son is out. This will be necessary for the eagle-required Camping Merit Badge and you and he will soon forget which campouts he attended. A week at Camp Boxwell can only be used once so if a scout goes more than one week, he is unable to use the 2nd week toward the camping merit badge.

◇ Several merit badges require keeping a record, diary or calendar of activity. Help them keep on task with this. You can keep the record in your notebook or file, if that is what your son wants.

◇ Have your scout work on his Personal Fitness merit badge while he is in middle school and/or when he is on an athletic team. It is easier to work the requirements in while they are on a regular workout schedule than when they have to remember to go run the mile, do the pull-ups or whatever. This is one of the merit badges that requires keeping a record.

◇ Rank advancements require leadership so make sure your scout attends the troop meeting when elections are held (twice a year). He cannot be elected to any office if he is not present. If he does not have a leadership role, the Scoutmaster can assign him a leadership project which can be used toward advancement, but it is MUCH easier to be an elected officer.



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## **Once your son has earned the rank of LIFE...**

◇ Once again, check the status of your scout's merit badges and make sure he is on track to finish the last ones he needs for Eagle. He does not have to be finished with his merit badges to begin working on his project.

◇ Discuss with your son possible Eagle project ideas. Kick around ideas with your friends and family - anyone who might have a connection to a non-profit in Nashville. From his exposure to Eagle projects when he was a younger scout, your son might know if he would like to do a building project, painting project, landscaping project or another kind. This should be driven by him but you can throw out ideas to help him narrow down his choices.

◇ The project has a life all its own. It is a long process which should begin with your scout discussing the general idea of his project with Troop 31's Life to Eagle czar. Once it has been approved by that leader, your son should begin getting the specifics together, including photos of a "before," if appropriate. Getting the signatures of the appropriate people takes several weeks - yes, WEEKS - so don't schedule ANYTHING until you have them all.

◇ Your scout should not do anything toward his project (purchasing lumber to build something, begin cleaning out some brush area, or WHATEVER) until he has all the necessary signatures!

◇ Help your scout keep track of all the hours he puts into the planning and execution of his Eagle Project. From the first discussion of the concept to the stamping of the final thank you letter.

◇ Your scout will need a support letter from his parents, in addition to 5 other letters of reference. One should be from a religious contact, one from a teacher or coach, one from an employer (if applicable), and 2 others. Give these references time to write their letters and when your scout asks the person if they will agree to write a letter of reference, give them a stamped envelope addressed to the Scoutmaster.

◇ Your scout has to write a Life Purpose Statement about his goals. The Eagle Application suggests he include information about any experience he has had that demonstrates his leadership.

**GOOD LUCK!!**



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