

Handbook For Scoutmasters

1936 edition

Excerpt from page 92:

Advancement

"Get the boys to advance by giving them every natural opportunity to do so, by building a program of activities that lead progressively toward greater skills and higher ranks. If the outdoor program of the Troop is built on the right foundation it will automatically provide a thorough advancement. Let the aim be "each boy a First Class Scout" with emphasis on *First Class*."

Excerpt from pages 244-5:

What the Requirements Are NOT

"It is of extreme importance that the Tenderfoot Requirements be treated as the *living things* they are, and not as numbered steps to be taken toward procuring a badge.

Chief West emphasizes this when he says: "If the Scout Law is simply to a candidate a part of Tenderfoot Requirement No. 1, knowledge of the Flag, requirement No. 2, knot tying No. 3, we might as well give up right then and there. Those subjects - or any other Scout subjects for that matter - must never become simply numbered Requirements. The Scout Law is *not* a Tenderfoot Requirement, but the code by which the boy is to live in future years. The Scout Salute is *not* a Requirement, but the secret sign that opens the door to World Scouting and makes the boy a brother to more than two million other Scouts all over our globe. Knowledge of the Flag is the wedge by which loyalty to his country and pride in it enters his mind, and knot-tying his first step toward becoming a pioneer, a frontiersman.

"The only point in calling them requirements is that a boy is *required* to master them to prove his worth."

Excerpts from pages 956-64:

..."If this program [the Advancement Program] is to capture and hold the boy's respect it must be maintained on a high standard in keeping with the principles of the Scout Movement. It must not permit sham or pretense but must truly encourage the Scout to "Be Prepared." Then he will be able to serve others and he will develop valuable confidence in himself."

Principles of Scout Advancement

"Scout Advancement has introduced a new principle in competition. Elsewhere, in many places, a boy is encouraged to "beat" or "lick" somebody else in games or scholastic standing. In Scouting, the boy is encouraged to compete, not against somebody else, but against himself - his own record, his own previous measure of his knowledge and self-mastery."

..."There are two basic motives that urge him on:

One is a burning desire to acquire useful knowledge, so that (for example) under any conditions, wet or dry, high or low, he shall be able to light a fire with two matches, or one. This motive then is the one that prompts him to advance because he wants not only to be able to take care of himself (especially in the open), but also because he wants the ability to take care of others when they need his services.

The other motive is the desire to wear badges on his sleeve or sash to show his friends. Both motives are natural in boys and are perfectly legitimate, *except* when acquiring the badge rather than the knowledge becomes the boy's *primary* objective. Such a "badge-hunter" loses the whole meaning of the requirements. What is more, badge-hunters drop out of Scouting as soon as collecting has lost its first lure.

"When the boy sets out on the advancement trail, He competes against no other boy in the world save himself. As he advances he becomes a more skillful, useful, serviceable, dependable individual to himself and society. He has made progress in the pursuit of skills and has developed a certain amount of initiative."

The Significance of the Badges

"The badges which accompany his advancement and which the Scout wears on his Uniform are *not* to show that he has "passed certain tests." There should be no past tense implied! On the contrary, each badge cries out "I *can*, right *now* and *here!*"

The badge of rank worn by a Scout is like the M.D. sign on a doctor's door. It advertises to the world that "Here lives a man who is prepared to help sick people." So must the First Class Badge advertise to the world that here is a boy who is qualified to help others as well as take care of himself. It is not to be considered a decoration, but rather a symbol of knowledge and ability.

Games and other activities that review the various Scout Requirements should be worked into the Troop's program continuously so that the Scouts will not "grow rusty" for lack of an opportunity to use and practice their knowledge and ability."

The Scout Requirements

The requirements for Second and First Class Ranks were laid down, as Baden-Powell says, "with the idea that a boy who proved himself equipped to that extent, might reasonably be considered as grounded in the qualities which go to make a good, manly citizen." The Scouts who can swim, tie knots, follow a map, who knows First Aid, the trees and the stars has acquired something that not only enriches his own life, but also makes him more useful to others.

And yet, it is possible that the by-products of these practices are more valuable than the knowledge itself."

"Similarly, every other Scout Requirement while holding the interest of the boy, carries him toward the adult leader's aims."

Dangers of the Advancement Program

"That the boy comes through his Scout Requirements, as the result of genuine effort and who meets the counselor with open face and courageous heart, has started or strengthened the habit of self-mastery as exemplified in painstaking and honest work. He has experienced the joy of achievement accompanied by painless pleasure. He is living the life of a true Scout. That Scoutmaster or counselor who justly tells a boy that he has not yet fully met the requirements, and then points out with encouraging and helpful words the virtues of thorough preparation, the joy of effort and the grit required to be a real Scout, paves the way for the establishment of the habit of perseverance. Moreover, he serves the boy and the Scout Movement in the manner of an enlightened teacher and alert leader, rather than in the manner of a privileged dispenser of favors. In all probability, he has been rated by the boy as a "straight guy," rather than an "easy mark."

And yet, of greater value as it is, the Advancement Program with its badge awards is not without dangers.

When conducted in an haphazard manner, without definite and high standards and without rigid supervision, it is capable of encouraging the formation of negative and even bad habits. That boy who fails to make an honest and painstaking effort to prepare himself in advance for meeting a Scout Requirement, and goes forth to see the counselor, hoping to "get by," or who bides his time in a search for an "easy examiner," is likely to develop the habit of trying to "get something for nothing," of "sliding in under the ropes." That Scoutmaster or counselor who fails to check the boy in such an endeavor, softens the boy's fiber and violates the ideals of our Movement.

And then we must remind ourselves again of the danger that exists if we allow the Scout to be motivated in his advancement primarily by a desire to win badges, rather than become skillful and able."

A Means, Not an End

"Let us never forget that the awards given in the Advancement Program are not the ends in themselves, but only the means toward an end – the means of equipping the boys to play the game of Scouting successfully and thereby obtain from it satisfaction and growth.

There are Scouts who have not advanced beyond Second Class, and yet who have the real Scout spirit of the Good Turn, of unselfishness and thought for others. And there are others who are capable in the field of technical knowledge and yet entirely lacking in the spirit of Scouting. A combination of both achievement *and* the Good Turn is most desirable, of course.

In the last analysis, a Scout is measured by the spirit of his heart and not the badges on his sleeve."

Administration of the Advancement Program

"If well administered, with high standards, the Advancement Program is one of our greatest means of holding and influencing the boy. If poorly administered, on the other hand, it may break down in the boy's mind the ideals for which Scouting stands."

Excerpt from page 167-170:

The Main Object of the Patrol Method

"We must keep constantly in mind, though, that "*The object of the Patrol Method*"—as Baden-Powell says—"*is not so much to save trouble for the Scoutmaster, as to give responsibility to the boy—since this is the very best of all means of developing character.* The Scoutmaster gives the aim, and the several Patrols vie with each other in attaining it, thus automatically raising their standards of keenness and efficiency all around."

How Do We Recognize the Patrol Method?

"Naturally, the results claimed for the Patrol Method are not obtained unless the Troop is truly run according to its precepts.

How then may we recognize a Troop which truly uses the Patrol Method?

Let us investigate—let the curtain rise on three Troops of three different types of organization and administration. There may be other types, but these will be sufficient to illustrate the point.

Troop No. 1 prides itself on its Merit Badge Scouts. The Scoutmaster is a biologist and his hobby is cramming fact into the young minds. He fills their heads with technical information, such as the symptoms of apoplexy and sunstroke, the difference between scarlet oak and red oak, the recipes for hunter's stew, and the badge-covered Scouts miss the essential point of advancement—"Learning by Doing." The Scoutmaster conducts his Troop as one large class. Its hikes and camps are outdoor class sessions. The Patrols exist only as sub-divisions on the Troop records. "Patrol Leader" is merely an honorary title. Since all imagination, all initiative, all responsibility, are thus restricted to the Scoutmaster, the Troop, when free from his control, generally degenerates into a disorganized mob.

Troop No. 2, whose Scoutmaster has had military training, is the banner Troop for exhibitions, drills, and parades. During the Troop meeting the proverbial pin drop can be heard. The hikes are marches, the camps exercises in tent pitching. The Scouts drill like clockwork. They are efficient in bandaging, signaling and other Scouting practices. Patrols are kept to full size of eight by being penalized when there are gaps in the ranks at drills. The Scoutmaster plans all programs, conducts all meetings, issues all instructions, and gives all orders. In fact, the Scoutmaster makes all decisions requiring initiative or responsibility. The only thing he delegates to his Patrol Leaders is the enforcement of discipline; his boy leaders are not allowed to exercise responsibility. The Troop is the dominant factor. The Patrols have no more individuality than the squads in a company of infantry.

Troop No. 3 has its share of Merit Badge Scouts and streamers testifying to its proficiency Council Rallies and Camporees. Yet, its Scoutmaster is never much in evidence. HE keeps himself in the background and offers only such stimulus, guidance and supervision as is necessary for the best development of Patrol efficiency and Troop spirit. The meetings of the Troop are planned and executed by the boys themselves through their chosen boy leaders. Always one Patrol or another has a surprise to spring on the others, such as a stunt, a game, a contest. There are never any problems of discipline, because the discipline comes from within

each boy and is not stamped upon him from without. Advancement is steady because the boys of their own desire are actually practicing Scoutcraft, not only at Troop meetings and occasional Troop hikes, but at numerous individual Patrol meetings and hikes which no adult takes part.

Each Patrol does its own thinking and can be trusted to carry a job through to the end under its own leadership.

The Test of the Patrol Method

"An old experienced Scoutmaster said once: "The test of the Patrol Method is in the easy chair!"

His audience looked nonplussed, so he elaborated his statement: "Get an easy chair and place it in a corner of the Troop meeting room. If you can sink into it just after the opening ceremony and just *sit* through the meeting, without a worry for its success, without lifting a finger or moving a foot until time comes for the closing—well, then your Troop is run on the Patrol Method—your boy leaders are actually *leading*."

That, figuratively, is the test—as exemplified by Troop No. 3 above—and indicates the condition toward which you should aim for the future of your Troop. For unless a Troop makes use of the Patrol Method, it cannot be considered a *Scout Troop*, since "*the Patrol Method is not ONE method in which Scouting can be carried on, it is the ONLY method.*"

And the two-fold secret of success is simple:

- I. *Make the Patrol the unit ALWAYS, in and out, through thick and thin, for better or worse, in victory and defeat, in games and contests, at meetings, on hikes, and in camp.*
- II. *Train your boy leaders for their positions, place the responsibility of leadership on them and let them exercise it.*

Only as a Scoutmaster acts on this principle does he understand—and use—the Patrol Method.

Trust 'em, Train 'em, Let 'em lead!

Excerpt from page 564-6:

Scoutcraft Presentation

"A presentation on some phase of Scouting should be a feature of every Troop meeting. All too often this "Instruction Period," as it has been called, has been a bugbear to the Scoutmaster. His notion has been: "We *have* to have some instruction in the Scout Requirements during the meeting"—and in an effort to provide it the Troop meeting has been turned into an old-fashioned school class session, with an "instructor" attempting to teach boys the more or less related subjects.

Such a procedure, naturally, is contrary to all Scout principles.

Dangers of a Mass-Instruction Method

"The argument may be advanced that "instruction" of the whole Troop as a unit saves time and enables one expert to "get his stuff across." This argument would hold water if our aim were to have the entire Troop advance one degree at a time. Fortunately it isn't! Our aim is to give each Scout as an individual an opportunity to grow according to his own abilities and interests. Some boys take to Scouting more intelligently than others. Should we attempt to keep them in lockstep with those who because of various handicaps move more slowly? Most certainly not!

Also, we are more interested in having Scouts—and especially Patrol Leaders—share in the leadership and responsibility of training other Scouts rather than depriving them of such opportunity. This is one factor which makes Scouting distinctive as an educational movement. It is the Scouting scheme.

Another point is that Troops which have been run a few months will be made up of candidates, Tenderfoot and Second Class Scouts; and Troops organized more than a year, of First Class and

Merit Badge Scouts besides. Hence, if any instruction were attempted, it would be too advanced for some and too elementary for others.

“very well then,” some will say, “what about splitting the Scouts up in groups according to rank and have an instructor in charge of each?” The best answer is a question: “Do you know of an easier way of destroying Patrol organization and breaking down the leadership of the Patrol Leader?” Our effort should be at all times to help the Patrol Leader, not to hinder him in his work, and *it is very definitely the Patrol Leader’s business to instruct his boys and help them to advance at Patrol meetings and on hikes, and not the business of the Troop meeting.* Any other way is contrary to Scouting.

And lastly—how many subjects can be thoroughly taught and learned in weekly twenty-minute periods? None!

The Object of Scoutcraft Presentations at Troop Meetings

"Obviously, then, the Troop meeting is *not* the place for a formal instruction of the boys. Our object during a possible presentation period should not be to *teach* the details of the Scout Requirements, but rather *to create and stimulate the interest of each boy* in Scout advancement, to provide individuals and Patrols with the necessary incentive for study and experimentation, to orient the boy in the subject rather than give the its details.

This approach opens up an entirely different vista and provides for any number of exciting possibilities.

Instead of dry demonstrations of bandages or blackboard talks on the skeleton, First Aid would be encouraged through spirited description of help rendered by Scouts in cyclones and floods. Interest in signaling would be inspired by dramatic presentation of the feats of Marconi an Edison, campcraft advanced through master campers telling of their experiences.