

Troop 96 Guide for the Eagle Court of Honor

So you just passed the Eagle Board of Review! Congratulations, but now what? It's time to plan the Eagle Court of Honor where you will be recognized for this outstanding achievement. Here are some tips for you and your family as you start to plan. There will always be someone to lend a hand at Troop 96!

What does the Troop/Council provide?

* National Eagle Scout Association Membership. There is an anonymous donor from NEIC (our Council) who pays for the first five years for all new Eagle Scouts.

* Eagle "Kit" This is a black velvet box that includes the Eagle Medal, which will be pinned onto the Eagle Scout during the ceremony, an Eagle Scout badge (goes on the uniform, if the Scout is under 18 years old), the Mom's Pin, the Dad's Pin and a Mentor's Pin. The mentor's pin can be given to the person of the scout's choice who he feels influenced his development. Mr. and Mrs. Leroy Blair provide this kit for free to every new Eagle in North Star District. (Note: If additional mentor's pins are desired, these can be purchased separately at the Council's Scout Shop.

* Eagle Letters of Commendation: The troop offers to send out letters of request for commendations/certificates from a list of dignitaries/agencies that are willing to provide them to Eagle Scouts. Your Scout can select who he wants letters/certificates from and the Troop will make sure that he receives them. Mrs. Karen White is the point of contact for Eagle commendation letters.

* The troop also provides an Eagle Scout plaque. The Chartered Organization Representative normally presents this on behalf of the Knights of Columbus.

Invitations:

Some people mail individual invitations. Some hand them out at meetings. Some people mail invitations to specific people, like adults in the troop, or the scouts that helped with their Eagle project, etc., and make up a flyer to take home for everyone else that comes to scout meetings. Invitation blanks are available at the Scout Shop or you can design your own invitation using your own computer and printer.

It is considered good form to invite the NEIC Scout Executive, the North Star District Commissioner, District Director and District Executive. These names can be found on the NEIC Website.

Also, make sure to send an invitation to the District Advancement Chair or Assistant Advancement Chair who worked with your son on getting his application approved through Council.

Mr. Klemens can provide the names of the people on the Board of Review – or you can call Pat Lample and she will also provide addresses.

Many of the people at Council listed above will “RSVP No” to your invite – but usually at least one of them will show up to represent the District.

Programs: The printed program used at the Court of Honor is just a sequence of events for the attendees to refer to and a memento to keep of the ceremony. The Scout hop sells blank program covers (or you may design your own).

References:

* The Eagle Court of Honor Book: You can check out some of the chapters to the Eagle Court of Honor Book before buying it at www.Eaglebook.com. (Also, Mr. Klemens has a troop copy for loan and several parents in the troop own this book – so ask around before you spend the money!)

* Search “Eagle Scout Court of Honor” and you will get any number of web pages from other Troops that have Eagle Court of Honor experiences and guidance.

The Ceremony:

Selecting a date: The date, time, and place of the Court of Honor are basically up to you to decide. You should, of course, be cognizant of holidays, school, church and Troop and Scoutmaster schedules. This will allow a maximum opportunity for other Troop members to attend. You should also give thought to whether or not a reception afterward will be held, and if suitable facilities are available for it. Please work with Mr. Klemens to finalize your date.

Selecting a location: Most of the common areas at the schools in Grayslake are available for reservation for a ceremony provided you reserve far enough ahead. Sundays are easier than Saturdays at the schools because of the sports programs in town. Talk to each school separately if you go this direction. Note: go in person to make the

arrangements if you can, get what you can in writing, and re-verify your reservations before the event. Parents in the past have been taken by surprise when the school they reserved a room with had "lost" their reservations.

Note: If you would like to use the St. Gilbert's facilities, contact Mr. Rupprecht, our Chartered Organization Representative.

While most Scouts use a local school or church hall, nearly any other venue is acceptable. Outdoor ceremonies at a local park, Forest Preserve or Scout Campground could be held.

Cost of reserving the hall: Frederick School is free because they have an on-going relationship with the local scout troops. They require a reservation form to be filled out, which will also tell them how you want the area set up (sound system, tables, chairs, etc). Other schools charge by the hour for rental. St. Gilbert operates on a donation basis for reserving their rooms.

Insurance. You may be asked for an insurance form for your specific occasion. An Eagle Court of Honor is a Troop 96 activity. If the venue already has a "general" Troop 96 form on hand, this is usually sufficient. They sometimes ask for a form to cover the specific occasion. You can get this form from the Northeast Illinois Council office. Just call the Council offices and ask to speak to the person who does these insurance forms. (Phone number is 847- 433-1813). They can generate your form in a week or less, and fax or mail it to you. For ceremonies at St. Gilbert, just check with Mr. Rupprecht, our Chartered Organization Representative, about insurance.

Suggested Court of Honor Agenda There is no exact ceremony that has to be held; each Eagle Scout is unique and so each ceremony should also be unique. But the ceremony usually follows a logical order. If you have a good reason then go ahead and change it. Our preferred ceremony has three main parts:

- * Scouting Segment
- * Eagle Segment
- * Eagle Charge, Eagle Promise and Presentation of Awards

The Eagle Court of Honor Book has a variety of complete Court of Honor scripts, which can be mixed and matched depending on what the Scout wants in his ceremony. Also, many complete ceremonies are published on

the Internet. The Scout needs to make many decisions about his ceremony!

The first person he needs to pick is a Master of Ceremonies. He / she will run the event from the stage and keep the pace of the event. He / she should be a good speaker, know the Eagle candidate very well, and have at least a small knowledge of Scouting. The master of ceremonies should not be the one that does all the segments. No one person should get more stage time than the Eagle Scout. He is the most important person on stage.

Next is an invocation and benediction, either from the head of your religious institution or other person you view as a religious mentor.

Presentation of colors: This is a normal part of any Scouting activity, but does not have to be the standard flag ceremony. This also gives the troop members a chance to participate.

Next is a section called the Scouting Segment. This starts to build the anticipation of the audience by explaining what Scouting is. There are many samples in the Eagle Court of Honor Handbook and in the on-line sources listed above, pick out the one that you want.

Eagle Scout segment: This talks about the Trail to Eagle. It can be as simple as a statement by the Advancement chairperson or it could be some kind of demonstration or reading.

The next segment is the Eagle Charge and Eagle Promise; ideally, an Eagle Scout should perform this. Young or old, there are many different possibilities. Also this can be combined with the above segment.

The Scoutmaster usually conducts the presentation of the Eagle Award. Presentation of Eagle Award is an exchange with the parents doing the presentation and the Scoutmaster assisting. Usually both the mother and father are on stage for this, but in today's society it could be any combination of parents, guardians, grandparents, make sure the family is consulted and buy whatever extra awards are needed to make the event special for the Eagle's family as well as the Eagle. The Mother's pin can also be called a Stepmother's pin or Grandmother's Pin or any other name that suites the family. (Please make sure the Scoutmaster knows your preferences.) The new Eagle Scout is formally introduced to the assembly for a round of applause (and usually a standing ovation).

During this time, if the parents want to have a speech of their own that is acceptable and usually happens around now.

Then there are presentations of special awards. This is where a few of the letters of congratulations are read if you want, as well as the plaque from the Troop or other honored guests. Either the MC can do this or another person who has not yet been a part of the ceremony.

Just before the Eagle Scout is left on the stage alone, there is a presentation of the Mentor's Pin. This is an opportunity for the Eagle Scout to formally recognize and thank the person who has been most helpful or supportive along the Trail to Eagle.

Then there is the Eagle address given by the Eagle Scout. The Scout should prepare either a written speech or at least a list of items that he wants to talk about. Typically, the Eagle Scout will review some of the more memorable parts of his own Scouting career, some lessons learned and perhaps offer a few words of encouragement for those still on the Trail to Eagle. If you start thanking people one at a time make sure that you thank them all. Do not leave someone out that might be in the audience. The Eagle Scout is the last one to speak except for the color guard.

The Reception

The decision about food can be difficult, but need not be – Scouts are always hungry and easy to please. Anything the family would like to do is acceptable. You may choose to have a meal, sandwiches, pizza or just cake and coffee. This is worked out before invitations are sent out so that it can be mentioned that cake and coffee will be served or whatever.

As for attendance, in the past it seems that Saturday ceremonies sometimes have fewer attendees than Sunday ceremonies due to the other commitments of the scouts on weekends. Rule of thumb: plan for 50% more people than actually RSVP.

Cakes. Some local bakeries can make cakes tailored to the occasion. Order at least a week ahead. "Picture" or "theme" cakes are popular. The bakery at Jewel does a good job on cakes at a competitive price. Lovin' Oven Bakery on Hwy 83 (North of Rollins Road in Round Lake) also has a good reputation.

Pizza. We have learned in the past that the pizza places can't always be trusted to deliver at the agreed upon time, so you may end up waiting for your delivery, whilst hungry scouts impatiently wait around for food. Best

idea is to arrange for the pizza place to deliver at least 30 minutes before you actually think you will need the pizza. You may be able to negotiate for them to bring warmers to keep the pizzas from getting cold.

Decorations:

Many Eagle Court of Honor decorations are available at the Scout Shop. It is not required that you spend any money there, however! Scouting paraphernalia can also be displayed. Most Eagle ceremonies include a table where the scout displays all his scout "stuff" collected over the years. Most impressive are the patch collections and scrapbooks or slide shows with pictures of the scout's adventures over the years.

Sign in/guest book/Eagle banner. Scout Shop offers a variety of items that can be used at the Court of Honor. Like in a wedding, some celebrations have included a guest book. Others have had an Eagle banner that the guests can sign, which the scout then can later hang on his wall, etc.

Eagle Scout Gifts. Your Eagle Scout may receive a number of gifts from friends and relatives at his Court of Hhonor. Have him prepared to write appropriate thank you notes. Also, it is appropriate to write a thank you note to Mr. and Mrs. Leroy Blair, c/o Northeast Illinois Council, as they have generously donated the Eagle "presentation kit" for your Scout.

Eagle-themed items are appropriate and usually appreciated as gift. For ideas, the Scout Shop has many Eagle items. You can see the catalog of everything that is available at www.scoutstuff.org.

One nice idea recently adopted by our troop is to present a commemorative flag flown over the Capitol in celebration of your new Eagle Scout's achievement. The request for a flag to be flown can take over 6 weeks. A certificate comes with the flag. Confirm that Mrs. White is handling this or get the Representative from your State to order for you. Go to this link for more info: <http://www.usflag.org/capitol.flag.html>

The Day of the Ceremony:

Setup: You may get to your ceremony location and find out that a previous group still occupies it past the time they are supposed to vacate it – or that they were unable to set up your space as you requested. Include enough time prior to the actual event for these contingencies.

Rehearsal: It is important to rehearse or walk through most parts of the ceremony (flags, honor guards, scouting and Eagle segments, Eagle Charge) at least once before the actual event. Readers need to practice their parts, so that this flows smoothly during the ceremony. Have your

participants show up 45 minutes to an hour prior for practice – and if you need them to help you finish setting up, you will have many helping hands!

Recording the event. Parents and scouts will be fully involved in participating in the Court of Honor. Select a non-participating person to be your designated photographer/videographer.

Please feel free to add to this guidebook with any helpful hints that you may discover during your own Eagle Court of Honor. Mrs. Karen White or Mr. Pat Klemens are the contact persons for this.

Above all, enjoy the day of the Eagle Court of Honor. It is one that the Eagle Scout and his family will always remember.

Troop 96

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