

# Ventura County Council, BSA

## The Silver Beaver Award



### Overview

To recognize registered Scouters of exceptional character who have provided distinguished service within the council.

### How the Silver Beaver is Awarded

Anyone may nominate any deserving registered Scouter to the council, which selects recipients for the following year. Each council may process their own annual allotment of Silver Beaver awards and shall send a list of Silver Beaver recipients for the calendar year to the National Court of Honor no later than January 31 of the following year.

### Supply Item Description & Uniform Placement

Silver Beaver presentation kits, certificates, pocket cards, Silver Beaver medal suspended from ribbon worn around the neck on formal occasions, knot for uniform worn above left pocket, and lapel pin for civilian wear.

### Selection Process Adapted and Followed by the Ventura County Council

From *GUIDELINES FOR DISTRICT AND COUNCIL COMMITTEES, Unit, District, and Council Recognition*, page 93. Adaptations/local implementation for Ventura County Council is denoted with brackets [*italicized text*]:

Annually, the council president appoints a temporary Silver Beaver Selection Committee. Its members are Silver Beaver recipients and may or may not be on the advancement committee. The Scout executive or designee serves as staff adviser. [*The council president has appointed the council advancement and recognition committee chair (CAC) as the chairman for the selection committee. The VCC Silver Beaver Selection Committee is comprised of the previous year's Silver Beaver recipients and each district advancement chair or their designee who are Silver Beaver recipients. The Scout executive has appointed the council advancement and recognition committee professional adviser as their designee.*]

Standing committees with the same members from year to year are discouraged. However, rotating members after given terms of service may meet the need of providing the different perspectives desirable.

1. The council will establish a deadline for submission of nomination forms. The Silver Beaver Award Nomination Form, No. 512-103, is available at [www.scouting.org/forms.aspx](http://www.scouting.org/forms.aspx) [*and is to be used as the sole source for distribution. No other forms will be accepted*].

2. Councils process their own Silver Beaver awards and order support materials directly from the Supply Group. Following the selection, councils must send a report to the National Court of Honor with the names, presentation dates, and council name to the National Court of Honor for the national historical record.
3. Plan for the presentation of the award(s) at the council annual recognition banquet or other pinnacle event, as reflects their status as the highest honor a council can bestow.

### **Additional Local Implementation/Interpretation/Noteworthy Items**

1. There is no requirement that a nominee be awarded either the District Award of Merit or other district or council award prior to being nominated or selected for the Silver Beaver award.
2. There is no requirement that the nominee must be a member serving in a volunteer position at the council or district level to qualify for the award. The only criterion is that the recipient of this award is a registered Scouter who has made an impact on the lives of youth [*not necessarily Scouts*] through service given to the council [*i.e. council/county-wide or district/community-wide level*] as noted in the Silver Beaver Nomination Form (page 1 and page 4).
3. [*Consent, by the members of the Ventura County Council Selection Committee, shall be unanimous as the means for selection for the award.*]
4. [*Only volunteer members of the Ventura County Council Selection Committee shall have a voice and vote for a nominee. Neither the Scout executive nor his designee shall have a vote; however, the Scout executive does have the right to void a selected candidate by withholding their signature on the Silver Beaver Nomination Form prior to being submitted to the National Court of Honor.*]

### **Number of Registered Scouters Eligible**

From the *RULES AND REGULATIONS OF THE BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA, Article X, Section 6, Clause 3(f)*: “Each duly chartered local council shall be entitled to one nomination. Councils having more than 60 units shall be entitled to further nominations on the basis of one for each additional 60 units or fraction thereof in their territory, as of December 31 preceding the nomination...”

### **Writing Strong Award Nominations – Why It Matters**

It’s all about our youth! The focus of adult recognition awards is impact on youth inside *and outside* of the Scouting organization. The selection committee is serious about evaluating adult volunteers for the most prestigious award the council may award to those volunteers. The committee depends on the completeness and accuracy of the nominations. Please take the time to complete the nomination and be thoughtful as you let us know the outstanding characteristics of the person you are nominating.

The chart on the following page shows how a statement, with a little thought, can become a strong nomination statement for the committee’s review:

INITIAL STATEMENT	THOUGHTFULLY CONSIDER	STRONG NOMINATION STATEMENT
“He has been a leader for a long time.”	How many years? Through which levels?	“For 11 years, she had led a large troop, persevering with younger Scouts through the difficult years resulting in mature young adults fulfilling the Mission of the BSA.”
“She is a great leader.”	What leader qualities does she exhibit? What makes her stand out above other leaders?	“She continually brings leadership opportunities to the youth. She encourages a youth-led approach by allowing Scouts to vote on and implement their activities.”
“He always goes above and beyond.”	Be specific! Tell a story about the great benefits those around him received due to his efforts.	“His crew voted to take a trek to Denali National Park in Alaska. Because of the level of planning, he worked with the youth leadership, their parents, and reached out to Scout leaders in Alaska as resources for the crew to draw from. As a result the youth had a great time meeting new people and discovering parent talent within their own crew. The trip was a resounding success and all have the memory of the lifetime.”
“She’s been a camporees committee member who helps whenever help is needed.”	Again, be specific! Tell a story about the support given to the youth and how they benefitted.	“This extraordinary person came to the rescue during the spring camporees when a couple of Scouts came across a nest of baby rattlesnakes. She kept the Scouts and leaders calm as animal control was called while educating the Scouts about the snakes and safety. The Scouts felt safe, and in control, thanks to her good guidance.”



November 8, 2016

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## **A Note from the Council Advancement & Recognition Chair on the Selection Process**

It seems to some that the Silver Beaver nomination and selection process seems to blur across councils or even year to year in the same council. Some councils don't like to reveal their selection process, have crude ranking procedures, ignore potential information on the personal records, don't ask for recommendation letters, and so forth. One might ask, "Why doesn't the BSA National Office set or provide a set of standards on what to use in this process?"

One might believe the nomination form is clear in some aspects, but may be obscure or obtuse in other areas. For instance, if the nominator doesn't know how many years and positions the nominated Scouter has, what noteworthy outside service to the community the Scouter has provided, what training course they've taken, then the big loser is the nominee who would have been otherwise selected.

Personally, I do not agree that the process from nomination through selection is particularly mysterious. The nomination form is very clear as to the criterion that is used to provide the selection committee make an informed decision. We have a "window" each year for submitting nominations, with clear instructions on where to submit the completed nomination form. A committee is formed consisting of the previous year's recipients, representatives from each of our districts (the district advancement chair or their designee who also holds the Silver Beaver award), and me, as a non-voting member, so it is not a "good old boys club" since the members are different each year. The members of the selection committee review all nominations and make the final selections for the year; and to be selected, the vote must be unanimous, just like an Eagle Scout board of review.

Any wise nominator will have done significant research before submitting a nomination, including getting as much background information on the nominee as possible. This often involves interviews (a telephone call usually suffices) with the spouse and perhaps other family members, members of the unit and/or district the nominee has been associated, and members of the outside organizations the nominee is associated. To not devote the time to this is to virtually guarantee that the nomination will fail to rise to the top.

Further, since multiple nominations don't help the cause, the better avenue is for Scouters wishing to nominate one of their peers is to collaborate with one another, thus producing a "winning" nomination via joint effort instead of multiple nominations. Letters of recommendation from Scouts, parents, peers, etc. also go a long way to help the committee make its decision.

Then there's the issue of how the nomination is written. The three essential elements for the nomination is: facts, facts, and facts. Hyperbole usually, if not always, fails. Facts—and the more of them, the better—will usually succeed.

So, if there is frustration or if you have a question about the process, consider having a chat with me, our professional adviser, or Scout executive.

Yours in Scouting,

Louis S. Leopold  
Ventura County Council Advancement & Recognition Chair

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