

COMMISSIONER *Shorts*

• SHARE SCOUTING MAGAZINE

The September 2002 issue had a great commissioner article, "Learning to Help Unit Leaders Succeed." It featured a recent annual Theodore Roosevelt Council commissioner conference, keynoted by National Commissioner Rick Cronk, who spoke on preventing "lost units." Sidebars explain commissioner positions and list how commissioners help a unit. Get a copy and share at your council's meetings.

• PHILMONT

Use the attached promo to help promote commissioner conferences at the Philmont Training Center. For more detail, see bsa.scouting.org.

• A QUOTE FOR YOUR NEXT MEETING

"A coincidence is when God performs a miracle and decides to remain anonymous."

• STILL MORE WISDOM FROM GEESE

When the lead goose gets tired, it rotates back into the formation and another goose flies at the point position.

Lesson: It pays to involve new people in doing the hard tasks and sharing leadership. With people as with geese, we are interdependent on each other and we need to share leadership roles.

• FOOD FOR THOUGHT

- **Change is a product of growth.**
- **Keep your eyes forward—don't live your life looking in the rearview mirror.**
- **Attitude is your most priceless possession.**
- **Attitude is a choice.**

Keith Herrel at the recent Western Region Leadership Training Conference

HOW IT IS FOR UNIT LEADERS

The whole hope of the movement rests upon two assumptions:

1. That unit leaders can use the Scouting program in a manner to make a difference in the lives of young people.
2. That district volunteers will do whatever is necessary to ensure every unit leader's success.

Here's the way it is for unit leaders; let's use the Scoutmaster for our example:

One night every single week the Scoutmaster knows there will be 20, 30, or 40 boys waiting at the

troop meeting place. There is no rest at all from that. It makes no difference whether the Scoutmaster brings a headache home from work, is tired, or would rather be doing something else.

He knows if he doesn't appear at the troop meeting, 30 or more boys will lose faith in him.

If he hasn't held enough meetings of the patrol leaders' council, his boy leaders will not function, and he'll have to run the meeting alone. All of that, and more, is important to the Scoutmaster because he takes it seriously. He knows the troop is composed of boys who

need his help.

The problem is that the Scoutmaster sometimes feels alone in his job. It isn't meant to be that way. The community organization that operates his troop is expected to care about what he is doing, but it isn't always easy for them to know how to help. Sometimes members of the organization seem to have so much faith in their Scoutmaster they let him do the job alone. A troop committee exists to help him, but sometimes they wait for him to call their meetings and make them effective.

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SERVICE PLAN *Dates*

The annual commissioner service plan gives specific purposes for regular and supportive commissioner contact with units. Prepare your commissioners for upcoming dates.

APRIL — Unit Leadership Inventory.

Conducted by the commissioner and unit committee. Find out who will continue and who will drop. Visit inactive adults. Recruit new adults.

MAY — Troop Uniform Inspection.

Commissioner helps Scoutmaster and lends dignity to a high morale event. Encourage uniform for summer camp. Develop unit pride.

30 DAYS AFTER EACH UNIT CHARTER RENEWAL — Charter Presentation.

Commissioner presents charter at an event of the chartered organization (not the unit). Make it special.

DURING THE UNIT CHARTER RENEWAL MEETING — Quality Unit Measurement.

This is the time to help all unit adults check how they did during the past charter year and commit for the charter year ahead.

Calendar ITEMS

2003 May 28-30

National Annual Meeting, Philadelphia

June 15-21,
July 13-19

Commissioner and Key 3 Conferences at

July 27-August 2

Philmont Scout Ranch

THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMISSIONER SERVICE IN THE BSA *continued from page 3*

It's quite likely the parents appreciate all he is doing for their sons, but they may not always show it. The Scouts enjoy their experience, but sometimes they too take him for granted.

Considering all the things a Scoutmaster must do to operate his troop successfully, he probably spends from 30 to 40 hours each month to do them. In addition, he is expected to give a week of his vacation each year to provide a long-term camping experience. He probably wouldn't be doing all of that if he didn't derive some pleasure and satisfaction, but it is a demanding volunteer service to render. It isn't surprising if he becomes discouraged or even disgusted once in a while.

It is in those moments that a Scoutmaster feels alone and wonders if it's worth the effort. It's one thing if his troop's chartered organization forgets him, or if the troop committee isn't very helpful, but it's almost devastating if the Boy Scouts of America seems to be neglecting him. **But if a unit leader has an effective commissioner, he will never feel alone.**

The most important thing a commissioner does for a unit leader is to prove that somebody cares about him or her. This person is the connecting link between the Boy Scouts of America and the unit leader. When the unit leader is discouraged, it is this person who encourages. When the unit committee is not helping enough, it is the commissioner who meets with it on behalf of the unit leader. Even when there are no problems, it is the commissioner who works closely enough with the unit leader to prevent future ones, and to prove the district cares.

UNIT COMMISSIONER BOX SCORE

OCTOBER 31, 2002

| Region | Number of Units* | Unit Commissioners Required | Unit Commissioners Registered | Need to Recruit | Percent of Need Filled Last Year/This Year | Unit/Commissioner Ratio Last Year/This Year |
|-----------------|------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|--|---|
| Northeast | 19,998 | 6,667 | 4,006 | 2,661 | 58.9 / 60.1 | 5.1 / 5.0 |
| Southern | 33,790 | 11,265 | 6,021 | 5,244 | 51.1 / 53.4 | 5.9 / 5.6 |
| Central | 27,405 | 9,136 | 6,223 | 2,913 | 65.6 / 68.1 | 4.6 / 4.4 |
| Western | 41,591 | 13,867 | 7,928 | 5,939 | 50.9 / 57.2 | 5.9 / 5.2 |
| NATIONAL | 122,784 | 40,935 | 24,178 | 16,757 | 55.5 / 59.1 | 5.4 / 5.1 |

* Does not include Explorer posts or Learning for Life groups