

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.

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.