



the COMMISSIONER

A PUBLICATION FOR COUNCIL COMMISSIONERS AND SCOUT EXECUTIVES **SUMMER 2001**



GOOD VOLUNTEER-PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS *A Guide for Commissioners*

Since the early days of Scouting in the United States, good volunteer-professional relationships has been one of the special hallmarks of the Boy Scouts of America. Today, this special partnership between volunteers and professionals is the core of its success at a council/district level.

Both commissioners and professionals share responsibility for building good working relationships in Scouting.

QUALITIES OF A GOOD RELATIONSHIP

Good volunteer-professional relationships are characterized by mutual trust, mutual respect, and mutual recognition of each other's role and competency.

When the partnership is working well, both partners are aware of their interdependence; they have complete confidence in each other; and they share the same objectives (to help units succeed in providing a quality program for youth). In Scout districts, for example, mutual dependence results because district executives know they cannot possibly do all the work that needs to be done, and commissioners know they need the coaching and experience of full-time professionals.

If partners have complete confidence in each other, they will seek each other's counsel. Neither partner has a monopoly on wisdom, judgement, or experience. When the full resources of both parties are applied to decision making, the combination is unbeatable.

Your professional is a Scouting friend and counselor. Working together is more effective when volunteers and professionals enjoy each other's

company. Professionals do not work for volunteers, but with them as partners on behalf of youth. The unselfish service you both render and your common dedication breeds mutual respect and a feeling of kinship. One test of the relationship is whether the two parties think of each other as friends.

Occasionally a volunteer will say to a professional, "Remember, you get paid for this, and I don't." But that is not the significant difference between volunteers and professionals. The significant difference is that volunteers are able to give only a portion of their time to Scouting, while professionals give their full time, and then some.

This means professionals are dependent upon the Scouting movement for the material things of life, but it does not mean professionals look upon Scouting differently than volunteers. Both are dedicated to the same principles, and both are trying to live out those principles in their lives and in their work.

The fact that professionals give all their time means their experience is broader and deepens more quickly. Their training is more intensive and continues throughout their professional careers. This makes their coaching more valuable to volunteers. So seek out the guidance of your professional coach. *(continued on page 2)*



William F. "Rick" Cronk serves as national commissioner of the Boy Scouts of America. Rick is president of Dreyer's Grand Ice Cream, Inc. He is a Silver Beaver, Silver Antelope and Silver Buffalo recipient who has served in a variety of local and national responsibilities, including troop committee member, council president, area president, and Western Region president.

GOOD VOLUNTEER-PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

A Guide for Commissioners

(continued from page 1)

Tips for Better Relationships

Here are a few tips on how good commissioners work with their professional staff advisors:

A. Begin to build a good relationship with your professional from your very first visit. Be positive. Be enthusiastic. Be well prepared. Think in advance about the impression you want to make as one of the trusted volunteers of the district or council.

B. Be accessible to your professional adviser. Exchange phone numbers, e-mail addresses, mailing addresses, etc. Avoid the impression that you are too busy or annoyed when he calls. Return his calls. Set up regularly scheduled visits and/or phone dates. You may need to talk weekly, monthly, or less frequently, depending on your responsibilities.

C. Create a welcome environment for the new professional and plan ways to incorporate him or her into the team. Remember, it's easy for a group to turn inward and make newcomers feel awkward or unwelcome. Send a letter of introduction to commissioners from an appropriate person in authority (council president, Scout executive, etc.). This helps a person feel good about joining the district or council. It also helps commissioners get acquainted with the new pro.

D. A professional will try to make efficient use of commissioners' time and, as best they can, plan visits and meetings at times that are best for you. Commissioners and professionals should help make the most efficient use of each other's Scouting time.

E. Commissioners should know that they can turn to their pro for advice or troubleshooting. Help create the kind of relationship in which you are comfortable asking for help.

F. There will inevitably be some professionals you don't like as much as others. That's human nature. However, part of being a good Scouter is working with all kinds of people, even when the human chemistry isn't just perfect. Feel free to talk with your professional partner about how you are working together.

G. While you obviously want to form a Scouting relationship, it is nevertheless important to get to know your professional as a whole person. Most of us will feel more comfortable working with someone who is interested in other aspects of our lives as well as our Scouting responsibilities. Keep in mind that Scouting is not a person's only priority in life. They will have family priorities and may be active in religious and other activities.

H. Let your professional adviser know if you plan to have your spouse, secretary, or work associate assist you with a Scouting task, and how the pro can be helpful to that person.

I. Develop good communications in which you and your professional really listen to and understand each other.

J. In some instances the function of guiding other volunteers is shared between you and a pro. For example, both the council commissioner and district executives have a direct working relationship with district commissioners. Unit commissioners work with both their district executive and their ADC. You and the professional should be careful to avoid confusion for volunteers and to ensure that they receive consistent messages and have a compatible relationship with both their volunteer leader and the professional.

A Closing Note

Historically, Scouting's great success has resulted because of volunteer talent and the professionals who guide and support talented volunteers. The continuing greatness of Scouting as a volunteer movement is in your capable hands as you and your volunteer team work effectively with your professional adviser.

As Council Commissioner —

- **Share this article and discuss at your next commissioner cabinet meeting.**
- **Discuss with your Scout executive when the workshop on "Good Volunteer-Professional Relationships" was held with the council staff.**
- **Include a session on this topic at your next annual council commissioner conference (New session in 2001 edition of Continuing Education for Commissioners, No. 33615C).**

COMMISSIONER *Recruiting Ideas*

To help move all your districts to a 3-to-1 unit-to-commissioner ratio, discuss these ideas at both your next council cabinet meeting AND your next council staff meeting.

1. Provide a distinctive commissioner golf shirt or jacket for each district commissioner and district executive who has a complete team, including the 3-to-1 ratio. The shirt or jacket can only be worn as long as the district retains a complete staff. Use a short ceremony at cabinet meetings to present and withdraw the recognition items!
2. Hold a group recruiting event (see the fall 2000 commissioner newsletter).
3. Develop a "recruiting mentality"; be on the lookout for good commissioner prospects 365 days a year.
4. Suggest to the Scout executive that this be a critical achievement for all unit-serving executives.
5. Every current commissioner who recruits a new person is entered in a drawing for a donated family getaway weekend.
6. The council commissioner and Scout executive both make it a priority.
7. Discuss with each district commissioner and district executive their target staff size and current staffing level. Help them identify prospects.
8. A commissioner is not considered recruited until his/her application (paid or multiple) is submitted to the council service center.
9. Train district commissioners and ADCs in recruiting techniques.
10. Review chapter 8 on recruiting in the *Commissioner Administration* manual.

COMMISSIONER *Shorts*

• A LESSON FROM GEESE

As each bird flaps its wings, it creates an uplift for the bird following. By flying in a V formation, the whole flock adds 71 percent greater flying range than if the bird flew alone.

Commissioners who share a common direction and sense of community can provide better unit service because they are traveling on the thrust of one another.

• WORDS OF WISDOM

Lead your life so you won't be afraid to sell the family parrot to the town gossip.

• A QUOTE FOR YOUR NEXT MEETING

Make sure that your commissioners are always keeping unit leaders' interests in mind. Remember this: When a person goes into a hardware store looking for a drill or a drill bit, what he or she really wants is a hole. Make sure your commissioners are constantly asking themselves, "What kind of holes do our unit leaders want?" Then make sure you are providing them with the holes they need.

• ORIENTATION of new unit commissioners is important (should occur within two weeks of being recruited). See the latest *Commissioner Fieldbook*, No. 33621C, for expanded orientation projects for new commissioners. See *Commissioner Administration*, No. 34128C, for the orientation session on page 34.

SERVICE PLAN *Dates*

The annual commissioner service plan gives specific purposes for regular and supportive commissioner contact with units. Review these dates with your district commissioners.

AUGUST — Unit Program Planning. Unit commissioners visit with unit leaders to help where necessary with the planning process. With a new program year starting September 1, a unit annual plan should be completed by August 31.

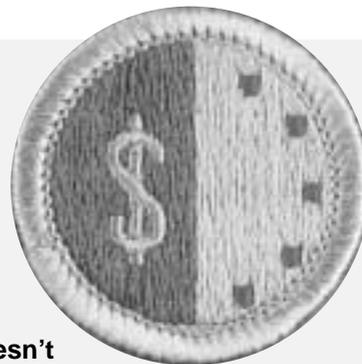
OCTOBER — Uniform Inspection. Commissioner helps pack and troop leaders, lends dignity to a high morale event. Encourage uniform for all members. Develop pack and troop pride.

NOVEMBER — Youth Protection Visit. Commissioner explains and promotes latest BSA child abuse training booklets and videos at a fall meeting of adults in the unit. Guide your commissioner to make this a meaningful event in each unit.

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.

The Personal Management Merit Badge Doesn't Teach About Wills



That's OK; a Scout doesn't need a will. Scouters do, though, and just as Scouting helps boys prepare themselves for the future, we can help you prepare by answering questions and providing solutions for your particular estate planning needs. Contact your local council or call toll-free at 1-800-BSA-INFO. Be prepared.

Calendar ITEMS

2001 August 5-11
Commissioner and Key 3 Conferences at Philmont Scout Ranch

July 23 — August 1
National Jamboree



2002 June 5-7
National Annual Meeting New Orleans, LA

UNIT COMMISSIONER BOX SCORE

APRIL 30, 2001

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	19,415	6,467	3,583	2,884	54.9 / 55.4	5.5 / 5.4
Southern	30,902	10,302	4,350	5,952	40.0 / 42.2	7.5 / 7.1
Central	26,297	8,765	5,396	3,369	61.2 / 61.6	4.9 / 4.9
Western	39,094	13,030	6,267	6,763	40.3 / 48.1	7.4 / 6.2
NATIONAL	115,708	38,564	19,596	18,968	47.6 / 50.8	6.3 / 5.9

* Does not include Explorer Posts or Learning for Life Groups