

Spring 2019

# THE COMMISSIONER

A PUBLICATION FOR COMMISSIONERS AND PROFESSIONALS

[www.scouting.org/commissioners](http://www.scouting.org/commissioners)



## National Commissioner's Minute

It has been a year since I assumed the role of your national commissioner. I am convinced more than ever that commissioners are the “glue and grease” of Scouting. In looking back over the year, it is apparent to me that you have accomplished a great deal. Since last May, you have welcomed girls into Cub Scouting and Scouts BSA. You have made more unit visits than ever before, helped establish new units, and guided leaders through changes involved in having girls join Scouting. Well done!

Family Scouting has been an adventure for all of us. What a wonderful opportunity for these girls and for the BSA. From what I can tell, everyone—boys and girls, along with their parents—is loving it. It's an exciting time for the BSA, to say the least.

This last year, recorded and counted unit visits reached an all-time high—up 2 percent with more unit visits than in 2017. Indeed, over the course of the last several years, each year you have visited more units than in the previous year. While 2 percent may not seem like much, it occurred in a year when, for the first time, a detailed assessment was required in order to count any visits for a particular unit. I'm confident that those detailed assessments led to Unit Service Plans, our best method for impacting a unit. I'm looking forward to seeing more units medaling in 2019 than have ever medaled before. Thank you for all you are doing to ensure unit success.

Your Commissioner Service Team has been busy too. This month you'll meet Craig Martin who will link Explorers with commissioner service. Look for the article introducing him.

The commissioner cabinet will see changes this month as well. We are saying thank you to Kandra Dickerson (Central Region), Ken King (Northeast Region), and Bill Talley (Southern Region) for their service. All three have served with distinction and taught me so much about their regions. I'd like to take a moment to tell you about some of their successes.

I've decided that Kandra Dickerson knows everyone in the Central Region, and everyone loves her. I had the privilege of team teaching with her once this winter and getting to watch firsthand how she responds to each individual, each need. Kandra has been a wonderful regional commissioner and I thank her for her service.

Ken King, Northeast regional commissioner, will be recognized with the Silver Buffalo at the National Annual Meeting for his service to youth. Part of that service has been through Scouting, and commissioner service in particular. On Ken's monthly calls,



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you usually find him listening to the area commissioners and inviting guests who bring additional information to the group. Ken is a “hands-on” Scouter with his great-nephew's pack. He has represented the Northeast Region well and his service has made a difference. I'm grateful for his service.

Bill Talley has led commissioner service for the Southern Region these last three years. He has a big region and has covered it well, encouraging commissioners to succeed. Bill identifies leaders, gives them opportunities, and lets them run with their ideas. Bill has provided great service to the Southern Region.

Mike Weber, Linda Baker, and Gail Plucker will step into these roles, respectively, as regional commissioner. Look for the articles introducing them in this newsletter.

This is a great time in the Scouting year. It is a time to look back on accomplishments and look forward to what lies ahead. It is a time for celebrations, a time for setting goals. The summer is coming with opportunities for camping, Scout camp, the world jamboree—adventure awaits us all.

Thank you for your continued efforts to serve our youth and ensure a great Scouting experience for them.



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## Meet Linda Baker



Linda Baker

Dr. Linda Baker will step into the role of Northeast regional commissioner at the National Annual Meeting, bringing her passion for making kids and parents feel welcome in the BSA program. Dr. Ken King will step down from his post as the regional commissioner. He has brought so much to the region and he will be missed.

I met Linda during the formation of the *Unit Performance Guide*. She brought a wealth of knowledge about millennial parents and their kids and how best to reach them. The sense of being welcomed and the feeling of belonging are key for these kids and their parents. Linda has

brought that message to the Cub Scout subcommittee, and the new member coordinator (Linda led the development team for that and continues to serve as chair) and program committees.

Linda brings experience in those areas as well. For the last three years, she has served as vice president of program for the Northeast Region. She has held numerous membership positions in the past, including council commissioner. This year Linda spearheaded the formation of a new troop for girls linked with the troop for boys for which she is the committee chair. Linda brings a wide array of experience to the position—just what we need in commissioner service.

Linda is a Vigil Honor member of the Order of the Arrow, and a recipient of the Distinguished Commissioner Service Award and the Silver Beaver, Silver Antelope, and Silver Buffalo awards. Join me in welcoming Linda Baker as the Northeast regional commissioner.

## Meet Gail Plucker



Gail Plucker

The Southern Region has chosen Gail Plucker as the regional commissioner who will assume office at the National Annual Meeting as Bill Talley steps down. While we will miss Bill, we welcome Gail to the national commissioner cabinet.

I first met Gail in a council commissioner training course at Philmont, and it was easy to tell she was a star then. She wasn't

the council commissioner—or even thinking she would be; she just wanted to know more about commissioner service. That is typical of Gail—reaching out and learning more so that she can better serve others.

The Pluckers are a Scouting family—Gail and her husband, Robert, have served in multiple unit leadership positions and have two Eagle Scout sons, Collin and Graham. Gail started out in commissioner service as a roundtable commissioner and quickly moved into the role of district commissioner. She became an assistant council commissioner and then council commissioner in Middle Tennessee Council, and later became an assistant area commissioner and area commissioner. For the last year she has served as assistant regional commissioner.

Gail is committed to commissioner service. She pays attention to reports, follows those up with personal contacts, develops a plan, and executes it. She tackles challenges with persistence and dedication. Gail Plucker is going to do great things for the Southern Region and for commissioner service. Please join me in welcoming her to the position of Southern Region commissioner.

## Meet Mike Weber



Mike Weber

Mike Weber is the new regional commissioner for the Central Region. He will take office in May when Kandra Dickerson retires. Kandra will be missed, but I am confident that Mike will fill that position well.

I first became aware of Mike during cabinet meetings. It seemed that every time we were discussing a situation—and sometimes when we weren't—

Kandra would begin with “Mike Weber ...” and conclude with what always was an innovative, dead-on solution. Over time I've come to expect that of Mike. He is known for his ability to recognize opportunities for growth and change, formulate goals and plans, and then make them happen. He's going to do great things for the Central Region and for commissioner service across the BSA.

Mike is a longtime BSA member. He joined over 40 years ago as a Wolf Scout and earned his Eagle Scout rank. The same year he earned that Eagle he trekked at Philmont and went to a national jamboree.

As an adult, Mike has served as Cubmaster, Scoutmaster, and Exploring post advisor; as a district commissioner and chair; and as council commissioner and president. Mike is a Vigil Honor member of the Order of the Arrow and has been recognized with the Distinguished Eagle Scout Award.

Mike's family is involved in Scouting as well. He and his wife, Amy, are active in the Michigan Crossroads Council, have three Eagle Scout sons, and continue traveling and enjoying the outdoors with their six grandchildren. Please join me in welcoming Mike Weber to the role of Central Region commissioner.



# Why Simple and Unified?

As commissioners, we share the BSA's mission: To prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Law. Everything we do helps units deliver a program that will attract and retain youth—and adults—so that mission can be accomplished. When successful, commissioners help ensure that every member of the BSA has a great Scouting experience.

Commissioners, like all volunteers, lead busy lives filled with potentially conflicting personal, professional, and Scouting commitments. To have maximum impact on the units you serve, you need to be able to work quickly and efficiently. Your National Commissioner Service Team has long been committed to providing you with **simple** tools and techniques. That requires continually assessing what you do and ensuring it is essential. As new, better ways are found to serve units, old processes no longer needed must be eliminated.

The need to simplify resulted in identifying a limited number of commissioner goals, such as making meaningful unit contacts. It caused the elimination of an annual service plan containing a list of standardized monthly tasks and its replacement with a customized Unit Service Plan developed collaboratively with unit leaders. It drove development of technology to provide a single source of information about unit health that could be shared by all commissioners and professionals. It inspired new approaches to training and communication that enable learning the basics of a new role quickly as time permits, and allow commissioners to keep current on Scouting news and opportunities, participate in experiential learning, and share best practices related to more complex subjects.

It resulted in web-based reference manuals and other resources that are easier to access. Simple can never be simple enough; that's why new, more focused approaches to recruiting are being developed and an upgraded, easier to use version of Commissioner Tools just came online. Your service team will continue to listen for feedback and further simplify what you do and how you do it.

Simple alone isn't sufficient; our approach to the work we do must be **unified**, too. Awards and recognitions for commissioners were revised to align with our current tools and techniques. Our collaborative approach to assessment, planning, and action aligns efforts. Linking to district operating committee and other resources provides faster, better solutions to unit needs. We're partnering with others: with membership volunteers and professionals to enable a more successful launch of new units and with Scouting U to ensure our training of volunteers and professionals is aligned. There's much left to be done, but increasingly commissioners, professionals, and unit leaders have access to information using the same sources and tools.

We have an ambitious mission: developing America's youth. Ensuring that every member of the BSA has a great Scouting experience is an equally ambitious vision. There's no time to waste. Your service team will continue to seek simple and unified tools and techniques for you to use in supporting the unit leaders you serve and enabling those units to grow and thrive.

On the uptrail ...



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# Welcome, Craig Martin!



*Craig Martin*

Exploring serves over 104,000 youth through over 4,700 posts and clubs. It offers a career education program that helps young men and women make informed decisions about future careers. It has five emphasis areas (career opportunities, character development, life skills, leadership experience, and citizenship) and uses six methods (voluntary association between youth and adults,

ethical decision-making guidance, group activities, recognition of achievement, democratic processes, and interactive experiences).

Posts and clubs—like packs, troops, crews, and ships—need support. In some councils, Exploring has established service teams to meet that need. Frequently, Exploring service teams are not available and often their resources are inadequate. The role and responsibilities of Exploring service team members are identical to those of our commissioners. It's become clear that we can serve both our Exploring and our Scouting units most effectively if we combine resources. To enable that, Craig Martin has joined your National Commissioner Service Team as Exploring chair. Craig also serves as National Exploring Service Team chair and, by virtue of that position, is a member of the national Learning for Life executive board.

Craig has extensive experience in both Scouting and Exploring. He was involved in Scouting as a youth and continued his involvement as an adult in several councils where he served in a variety of roles, including unit commissioner, district service team member, district commissioner, council advancement chair, assistant council commissioner, council commissioner, and executive board member. Most recently, he served as the Western Region's Area 2 Exploring chair. His service earned him the District Award of Merit, Distinguished Commissioner Service Award (for both district and council service), and Silver Beaver Award. A long-serving member of the U.S. Air Force, from which he retired as a colonel, Craig also received the Department of Defense Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal. He is Wood Badge trained, has served as a Wood Badge course director, and is a Brotherhood member of the Order of the Arrow.

In his role as a member of your National Commissioner Service Team, Craig is going to help better define how commissioners and Exploring service team members can work together to ensure that all Scouting and Exploring units receive the support needed to enable them to better serve more youth.

Those of you who will be attending the National Annual Meeting or a commissioner conference at Philmont Training Center will have an opportunity to meet Craig. You're in for a treat—and you'll quickly understand why we're thrilled to welcome him as a new member of your team!

Look for his first article in this edition of *The Commissioner*.



# Good Communication Helps Units Grow

If you think of a Scouting unit as a car, communication is the gasoline. If you want to keep that unit going and growing, you need good communication.

There are many ways to communicate in a unit. The important thing is to find the combination of communication tools that works in that unit. Notice I said “combination of tools.” In order to successfully communicate, you cannot rely on only one technique or communicate just once on a topic.

The reason you need to use several tools is that Scouts and Scouting families have their favorite way to get unit information. They may also be too busy to act on the message in a given week, so you need to convey that message multiple times in multiple ways.

But it's not just about the ways a unit communicates. It's also about what the unit communicates. Are Scouts and families receiving the information each needs to be successful?

As a commissioner, are you learning about the ways a unit communicates with the Scouts and their families? Do you get copies of the information sent? Are you evaluating the information that is shared? Is it complete? Is it timely? Are there mentoring opportunities with your unit?

There are many benefits to good communication in a Scouting unit. Communication builds relationships and helps resolve problems and overcome obstacles. This results in increased engagement and satisfaction with the program.

On the other hand, a lack of communication is a headwind that is tough to overcome. When someone doesn't get the message that there is no meeting next week, it creates issues.

One often overlooked communication item is the unit committee agenda. Knowing what topics the committee will discuss keeps everyone informed. It also focuses discussion during the meeting. It might even motivate a parent to attend the committee meeting based on interest in a particular topic.



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Sending out minutes that contain the decisions made and the rationale for those decisions after the meeting closes the loop with the unit's families.

One final thought to remember: Having no one-on-one contact with Scouts applies in cyberspace too! This means that leaders should include or copy a parent or another leader in all online communications, ensuring no one-on-one contact exists in texting, social media, or other forms of online or digital communication.

## Commissioner Social Media

As a supplement to this newsletter, the National Commissioner Service Team uses social media to help get information to commissioners and, ultimately, to Scouters.

The Commissioners Facebook page does not require answering any questions and is a great tool to learn and share. You can like or follow the page at [www.facebook.com/CommissionersOfTheBoyScoutsOfAmerica/](https://www.facebook.com/CommissionersOfTheBoyScoutsOfAmerica/).

There are also commissioner Facebook groups. The same information shared on the Commissioners Facebook page is shared on those, but they also provide a great opportunity to discuss issues and ask questions of other commissioners. There are questions to answer before you join a group, so please take the time to let the group administrators know a little bit about you. There are three groups:

- Commissioner Training–BSA:  
[www.facebook.com/groups/1976324522626471/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/1976324522626471/)
- Commissioner Service (Boy Scouts of America):  
[www.facebook.com/groups/bsa.commissioners](https://www.facebook.com/groups/bsa.commissioners)

- BSA Roundtable Commissioners: [www.facebook.com/groups/ScoutRTCommish/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/ScoutRTCommish/). This group is limited to roundtable commissioners and administrative commissioners at the district and council level.

In addition, there is a LinkedIn group for commissioners:  
<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/92833/>.



# Resources for Growing Units

When commissioners meet with unit leadership and the conversation comes around to growing the unit, the unit leaders will want to know how they can go about doing that. There are several ways to do that, and there are some BSA resources to help.

I also served as membership chair in my local council and found out that the most effective way to grow a unit is by word of mouth, specifically younger mouths. Peer-to-peer recruitment has been found to be the best way to grow a unit that is offering a great program. We are all familiar with school night recruitment, but if the school does not give the unit access, then the unit needs to get creative. How about recruitment through nearby churches or other places of worship? Perhaps they will let you put information on a flier in the church program or bulletin. Local sports clubs (like soccer, Little League, etc.), if approached, may let the unit give a pitch or hand out fliers. But it is best to ask permission first.

So, what BSA resources are available? Have you seen the [Membership and Marketing Hub](#)? That page has a tab for the [BSA Brand Center](#). Here there are templates for fliers, peer-to-peer recruitment cards, posters, postcards, social media posts, radio spots, and so much more. You need to share this valuable resource with your unit leaders and maybe help them put together a recruitment campaign.

Just as commissioners work with a unit to complete a unit health assessment, they can work with a unit to develop a recruitment plan to grow that unit. See the links below for sample plans for a pack and a troop that you could adapt to use with your units.

Pack Membership Plan: [https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/commissioner/doc/Membership\\_Plan\\_Pack.docx](https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/commissioner/doc/Membership_Plan_Pack.docx)

Troop Membership Plan: [https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/commissioner/doc/Membership\\_Plan\\_Troop.docx](https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/commissioner/doc/Membership_Plan_Troop.docx)



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# Commissioner College Schedule

The College of Commissioner Science program is a great way to get additional training. The Commissioners website provides a listing of colleges of commissioner science that we receive information about.

Please check the list, found on the [Commissioner Training page](#), if you would like to experience a college outside of your area or if your council does not currently run a college.

Note: To have your council's college listed, please send information to Darlene Sprague at [darsprague@roadrunner.com](mailto:darsprague@roadrunner.com).

## Questions and Answers

### Have you heard about The Adventure Plan (TAP)?

The Adventure Plan (TAP), available at <https://bsatap.org/>, is a tool to guide unit leaders at all levels—Cub Scouting, Scouts BSA, Venturing, and Sea Scouting—through all stages of adventure planning. Outdoor adventure is a key element of youth development in the Boy Scouts of America programs. Just as young people grow, learn, and mature in a continuing progression of experience, so, too, do the camping and outdoor programs of the BSA follow a natural progression. The BSA offers a continuum of experiences based on the age, interest, and ability level of youth and also offers recognition awards for all levels of Scouting outdoor adventures.

### What is the Commissioner Key?

The Commissioner Key encourages and recognizes continuing training, performance, and tenure by commissioners. The requirements can be found at: [www.scouting.org/commissioners/recognition/commissioners-key/ck-progress-records/](http://www.scouting.org/commissioners/recognition/commissioners-key/ck-progress-records/).

A commissioner at any council level (unit commissioner, district commissioner, roundtable commissioner, council commissioner, and all assistant commissioners at these levels) can earn this recognition by satisfying the requirements for the specific position and completing the form. The form is then given to the proper person for approval. The recognition is a square knot and device that is worn on the uniform. A Commissioner Key medal is also available.



# Using Technology to Grow a Unit

There are two primary ways to grow units: Create a new unit from scratch or make an existing unit larger. With the introduction of girls into Cub Scouting last year and Scouts BSA this year, the opportunities to create new units have nearly doubled.

Scouting has long relied upon commissioners to have a good sense of the communities they serve. Much more than just focusing on Scouting in the community, we've encouraged commissioners to be knowledgeable about the whole community: socio-economic factors, employers, population demographics, and more.

But rather than randomly trying to create units and hope they take root, the BSA has several tools that can help a commissioner have greater results. A quick way to get a geographical overview of where units meet is to look at the BeAScout.org map view centered on a specific zip code. (It is a good idea for the unit leader and commissioner to periodically check to see that their unit is displayed in BeAScout.) Sometimes just looking at the BeAScout map can quickly identify large population areas in need of a new Scouting unit.

A more sophisticated tool that can be obtained from your professional through MyBSA is called the Council Market Analysis (CMA) report. Among other things, the CMA report provides:

- Opportunity Zip Codes by Program and Ethnicity—This includes underserved youth, showing where the greatest opportunities of target age youth are specifically located.
- Council Mosaic Profile—Mosaic segments provide an in-depth look at the demographics and other traits of the communities that make up your council, allowing us to focus recruiting efforts and methods where the potential is greater based on ethnicity, culture, language, lifestyles, values, attitudes, and religious and political preferences, among other variables.

So how can technology aid in our efforts to grow units? One of my favorite tools to use is the ScoutNet District Totals Report, which you can get from your professional. This report provides a summary of the number of youth and adults, unit by unit, for the current and last month, in addition to other important data such as when the unit's current charter expires. (This is an easy way to check if a unit's charter renewal has been posted.) With the information found on the District Totals Report, you can identify units that are undersized and in need of specific recruiting help, as well as those super-sized units that might want to consider splitting if it would better serve the youth and the community. Additionally, the report provides district summaries, which can be used to identify macroscopic trends helpful in focusing recruiting efforts.

As commissioners we have access to Member Manager in my.Scouting, which gives us—through the unit's Youth Member Age Report—the ability to look for “unhealthy” unit youth age demographics. An example of this would be a unit in which most of its members were within a couple of years of aging out.



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# New Commissioner Tools Report

With the update to Commissioner Tools in early April, the technology team of professionals and volunteers is working to make smaller, more frequent updates to Commissioner Tools.

Have you noticed the new Simple Assessments with Comments report in Commissioner Tools? In addition to providing the standard unit information, this report provides the date of the simple assessment, along with who made the assessment, the assessment score, and the text from the comment field. This long-desired report provides an easy way for administrative commissioners to keep up with their units. If you have yet to run this report, I would recommend you give it a try—you might be surprised (both in good and not-so-good ways) at what is going on in your units. Take a look at the following excerpt from an unnamed district.

Visitor_Name	Position_Names	Contact_Date	Score	Contact_Comment
Charles Nicholson	Unit Commissioner	2/25/2019	1	Pack [REDACTED] is a pack in crisis! The District Commissioner and I met with three leaders of the pack this evening to see if the pack can be salvaged. The attendance has dropped from 12 down to 4 boys and the former CM, CC & Treasurer are no longer involved.
Elizabeth Ann Gold	Unit Commissioner	2/6/2019	3	Need more leaders and cubs
Charles D Minnich	Unit Commissioner	1/7/2019	4	Pack meeting- I asked the Committee Chair about the charter. He admitted that he hadn't been focused on it over the holidays. He asked about changing the Charter Partner Rep. and said he would work on the charter with more effort.
Charles D Minnich	Unit Commissioner	3/8/2019	4.5	Pack fundraiser- spaghetti dinner to aid in summer camp expenses.. Lots of parent and youth involvement. I understand they were happy with the amount of money raised.
Frederick Frank Hil	National Commission	4/8/2019	4	Unit is planning to go to summer camp for the first time. Camp [REDACTED].
Charles Nicholson	Unit Commissioner	2/19/2019	4	I attended Pack [REDACTED]'s Pinewood Derby Competition this evening. Good event, 8 boys raced their cars, well attended by parents & leaders. I was able to meet and chat with the new Organizational Head, Pastor Scott.



# Know Your Units and Help Them Grow!

Our last newsletter focused on sustaining units. Our focus for this newsletter is **growing units**. In order to successfully sustain units, units need to grow. And from my experience and perspective when I was a unit leader, a unit grows when the program attracts and retains youth and adult leaders and advisors.

As commissioners, we have a significant role to play in supporting unit leaders as they work with youth leaders to develop and deliver quality program. One very important tool we have is Journey to Excellence. According to the JTE website, JTE is the BSA's planning, performance, and recognition program designed to encourage and reward the success of units, districts, and councils. It is meant to encourage excellence in providing a quality program at all levels of the BSA.

[Guidebooks](#) are available on the JTE website under Unit Tools to assist packs, troops, crews, and ships, and their leaders and others (commissioners) plan and deliver an excellent Scouting experience. Excellent Scouting will help a unit grow.

Hand in hand with Journey to Excellence is the *Unit Performance Guide*. The third and fourth pillars, or steps, for new-unit organization and retention are Build the Unit and Grow the Unit. With new units being formed or expanded in Cub Scouting, Scouts BSA, Venturing, Sea Scouting, and Exploring, we are poised for some remarkable opportunities to bring Scouting to more youth and to ensure they have a great Scouting experience.

To make all this work well, we need even more commissioners to engage with units and to provide consistent support and guidance to unit leaders and committees. We know that a successful unit must plan to succeed. As commissioners, we must plan to increase our base as well by establishing recruiting goals. We've identified the need. We know we need more commissioners and we know it's a high priority. Never stop recruiting!

I encourage you to look back at our last edition of [The Commissioner](#). I talked about knowing your units and partnering for recruiting success by identifying and recruiting great commissioners.

Here is ONE thing that will help you start to focus on recruiting, engaging, and retaining commissioners: a commissioner recruitment initiative. Developing a commissioner recruitment initiative begins with looking at your strengths and needs. Partnering with your district committee is an effective strategy and a great place to start. The next step is working your plan year-round with the help of council- and district-level commissioners. This is **your** plan for recruiting, engaging, and retaining more commissioners.



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## Commissioner Recruitment Initiative

**Assess:** Identify your strengths and needs. Partner for success with the district Key 3 and committee. Where do you need more commissioners? Identify skill set and experience needed. Rethink the status quo. Going for younger volunteers is a smart strategy.

**Plan:** What are your recruiting goals? Use SMART goals. Establish accountability, institute consistent follow-up and review, and develop checkpoints.

**ACT:** Work the plan. Identify prospects through friendstorming and the nominating committee. Build relationships and develop a compelling "ask." Keep your perspective and be honest with expectations. Train and mentor—consistently. Remain engaged and establish accountability to make sure tasks are getting done. Celebrate success!

Never stop recruiting!



# Commissioner Development and Growing Units

“Simple and unified” is a phrase that is becoming more prominent for commissioners. We have numerous commitments and obligations, which make it necessary to be able to focus on the important aspects of our roles. A recent article by James Clear titled “How to Focus and Concentrate Better” (available at <https://jamesclear.com/how-to-focus>) described the experiences of Clyde Beatty. Mr. Beatty was a successful lion tamer who used a chair as part of his routine. He discovered that the large animals would try to focus on all four chair legs at once. The animals would become confused and froze instead of acting.

Commissioners need to focus on what’s important. Helping units grow is one of those important things. We help units grow by working closely with the leadership to ensure that the unit is functioning effectively and has a strong program that engages kids. This will give the unit the opportunity to grow.

Commissioners need to be equipped to fulfill their responsibilities. One of the best ways to accomplish this is to take advantage of the training and development opportunities that are available. Past articles in *The Commissioner* have suggested specific opportunities for this. Your team is focused on improving and expanding the national-level offerings.

What will you do today to become better equipped as a commissioner so that you can help units grow?



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## Starting, Sustaining, and Growing Units Impact Session a Success



In March, 83 Scouters from across the Western Region converged on Camp Tracy in the Great Salt Lake Council for the Starting, Sustaining, and Growing Units impact session. The session covered a wide range of relevant topics and was the most highly attended impact session to date. Here is what participants had to say about the conference:

Being at a table with people from different locations and different positions helped me have a wider perspective. I was also given advice from my table mates that was super helpful.

I was able to interact with other councils and learn some great ideas for moving forward. Many ideas were innovative and readily available for my use.

Multiple members of my council attended and we now have a common language for units.

Networking! Networking! Networking! Both with the National folks that were on staff and the other participants from all over!



# 2019 Impact Session Schedule Finalized

We are pleased to announce the following impact sessions for the remainder of 2019:

## **Technology for Commissioners**

August 23–25, 2019

Central Region, Crossroads of America Council, Indianapolis, Indiana

## **Delivering a Great College of Commissioner Science**

October 4–6, 2019

Southern Region, Sam Houston Area Council, Houston, Texas

## **Recruiting and Engaging Commissioners**

November 1–3, 2019

Northeast Region, Cradle of Liberty Council, Wayne, Pennsylvania

For information and registration, go to [www.scouting.org/commissioners/training/national/](http://www.scouting.org/commissioners/training/national/).

# Development Opportunity for Trainers at PTC

You may have missed the opportunity to attend Commissioners Week at Philmont Training Center this year, but there are other opportunities for commissioners that are focused on training. You may want to consider attending Training for

Trainers: Fundamentals, EDGE, and More during Week 7. This conference will help you become a better trainer.

For more information, go to [www.philmontscout ranch.org/PTC/conferencesO/](http://www.philmontscout ranch.org/PTC/conferencesO/).

# Applying Technology Conference at Florida Sea Base

We are pleased to announce a new conference for commissioners, Applying Technology in Unit Service, to be held January 12–18, 2020, at Florida Sea Base.

Attendees will have the opportunity to learn about the suite of tools available to commissioners including Commissioner Tools, Member Manager, Training Manager, Online Registration, Online Charter Renewal, and Scoutbook. Participants will have extensive engagement with Commissioner Tools in a hands-on learning environment. This will be an opportunity to provide meaningful feedback on the technology and will allow participants to expand their network of Scouters to enable broadening the use of technology. This conference will have extensive use of presentation, guided discussion, and hands-on experiential learning.

For information and registration, go to [www.scouting.org/commissioners/training/national/](http://www.scouting.org/commissioners/training/national/).





# Growing Units

Growing units in Scouting should be a year-round practice and commissioners should help lead the way. One of the primary focus areas of a unit commissioner is supporting unit growth and retention through the Journey to Excellence. JTE is the program designed to encourage excellence in providing a quality program at all levels of the BSA. Unit commissioners should use JTE and a collaborative assessment to assist the unit in its self-assessment. Once the assessment is completed, the Unit Service Plan should be developed and the unit commissioner should ensure the plan is being executed. The Unit Service Plan and JTE should be reviewed monthly at the unit committee meeting. “Assess, Plan, and ACT” should be the mantra of every commissioner.

When helping units develop a Unit Service Plan for growth, what should we look at? One important aspect is whether the unit has a unit membership plan.

Questions to ask include:

- How many youth did they recruit last year?
  - How many did they retain?
  - What is the JTE goal?
- What activities or events did they use last year for recruitment?
  - Were they successful?
  - Do they have new ideas?
- Are they on the [BeAScout.org](http://BeAScout.org) website?
  - Is the information up to date?
  - Is family Scouting indicated?
- Are they visible in the community?
  - Do they carry out service projects for the community and chartered organization?
  - Do they participate in school nights, youth talk, and marketing?
- Do they have a new member coordinator—or better yet two or three—on the unit committee?

The list above is a good start for the development of the unit membership plan as a part of the Unit Service Plan.

So the unit assessed and developed a plan; now to act. Who are the unit volunteers who will be responsible for helping the unit grow? Growing the unit is everyone's responsibility.



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Let's look at the volunteer position that every unit should be encouraged to have—the new member coordinator.

The role of the new member coordinator is to share the benefits of Scouting, coordinate unit recruitment, and guide the joining and welcoming process for youth and their families. The responsibilities of this valuable committee member can be determined by the unit's needs and the individual's interests and talents. New member coordinators can help grow membership and engage the new youth and their families in the unit experience so that they feel they are a valuable part of the unit.

For more information about the new member coordinator, go to <https://scoutingwire.org/marketing-and-membership-hub/councils/new-member-coordinator/> and <https://41zfam1pstr03my3b22ztke-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/NMC-Position-Description.pdf>



# Growing Units Through Effective Recruitment and Program

In early March, my younger son, Evan, celebrated the blue and gold banquet one last time with Pack 681 in San Diego. He and his fellow den members, having achieved their Arrow of Light rank, are now ready to bridge over to Scouts BSA troops and begin their journey to Eagle. Along with the Cub Scouts, a similar number of parents will also be transitioning over. As a result, the blue and gold banquet has always been a bittersweet time of graduation and departure. In the case of Pack 681, this represented 20 percent of the unit.

As commissioners, we are reminded to proactively work with unit leaders in various seasons of growth and transition. Prior to bridging, unit leaders usually have a good idea on who is transitioning out. Knowing this gives them time to start making key decisions on unit growth and program continuity. Commissioners can support these endeavors in three key areas. We'll describe them from the perspective of Cub Scouting and their applicability to the troop.

First, does the unit have an effective **new member coordinator**? Besides the Key 3 leadership, the new member coordinator is one of the most vital members of the unit committee in ensuring growth and retention. Commissioners can help convey institutional knowledge about relationships with schools, churches, or community groups if the leadership is new. Commissioners can also help the new member coordinator stay on top of councilwide recruiting initiatives if they are not regular attendees of roundtable (i.e., Rocket into Scouting, Hooked on Scouting). At the troop level, the commissioner can provide transitional information for Webelos Scouts planning to continue with Scouts BSA.

The second area of support is the different **seasons of recruitment**. Autumn is usually when a significant number of new youths join Cub Scout packs as they are heading back to school. However, spring recruitment is just as vital in identifying leadership candidates from new families and preparing them for new positions by fall. Having sufficient time for training is so important to the success of that role. And for the troop, growth primarily occurs during February or March when Webelos Scouts are bridging over.

The third and most important area for commissioner oversight is program execution. Nothing else affects unit growth more readily than program quality. More specifically, it is vital to maintain **trained leadership** and ensure leaders stay relevant with program changes. The commissioner can be a resource for district or councilwide training opportunities as well as program information. Every Scout deserves a trained leader, and many leadership positions require regular training in order to remain effective.

In summary, growth is a constant activity in which unit leaders and commissioners should strive to work together in order to maintain a healthy unit. The theme for our blue and gold event was **Forward Momentum** and this aptly applies to unit growth. These three key activities are part of forward momentum, and every unit needs to participate. Commissioners are there to support these endeavors and to maintain growth momentum going forward for the next generation of Scouting.



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# Helping Posts and Clubs Grow

Why has an Exploring chair been added to the National Commissioner Service Team?

It's a fair question: After all, almost everything you've seen from your service team since it was formed spoke to how commissioners can best help packs, troops, and crews better serve more youth through Scouting. You'd be hard-pressed to find references to Exploring posts and clubs, or to ships for that matter. That's changing.

Certainly, the Exploring program is different. It's a hands-on career education program for young men and women from sixth grade through age 20. It helps them make more informed decisions about career opportunities and plan for their work lives. Through Exploring, they can identify careers that might be of interest to them *and* careers that would not.

As a result, four out of Exploring's five areas of emphasis (character development, life skills, leadership experience, and citizenship) will be familiar to you; only its emphasis on career opportunities will seem different. You'll also be right at home with several of its methods (voluntary association between youth and adults, ethical decision-making guidance, group activities, and achievement recognition). Its remaining methods (democratic processes and interactive/hands-on experiences) aren't all that far from much of what goes on in Scouting's packs, troops, crews, and ships.

And there's something that is equally important to Exploring's posts and clubs and Scouting's packs, troops, crews, and ships: unit service. Exploring's unit leaders need the same support. Our terminology is a bit different—"service team members" rather than "commissioners"—but the work that is done is the same. Even the same fundamental tool, Commissioner Tools, is used to support efforts to assess and strengthen unit health. Service team members and commissioners share a common vision: to ensure that every member has a great experience.

Finally, Exploring shares a challenge familiar to you: Just as we don't have enough commissioners to serve our packs, troops, crews, and ships, we don't have enough service team members to serve our posts and clubs. The recruiting process is similar, much of the training is similar, and the service provided is



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essentially identical. It simply makes sense to work together to ensure that all our units are receiving the support needed to enable them to better serve more youth.

I'm looking forward to working with your service team and commissioners throughout Scouting to strengthen Exploring; I'm also looking forward to identifying opportunities for our service team members to help strengthen our packs, troops, crews, and ships. There's work to be done to align our efforts and you'll be hearing more about that. It began with presentations at this year's National Annual Meeting and will continue as I join in your service team's annual planning conference at Philmont Training Center immediately before Commissioners Week there.

It's a privilege to be a part of your service team, and I'm excited about our opportunities to work together to help all our units grow and thrive!

## Exploring Leadership Conference



The 2019 National Exploring Leadership Conference will be held July 9–12 at Ohio University in Athens. Council volunteers, Exploring professionals, and Exploring youth leaders are invited to attend.

Click [here](#) to see a schedule of all the events.



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# Leadership and Training Conferences Offered at the Summit

The following courses will be offered at the Summit Bechtel Family National Scout Reserve this year:

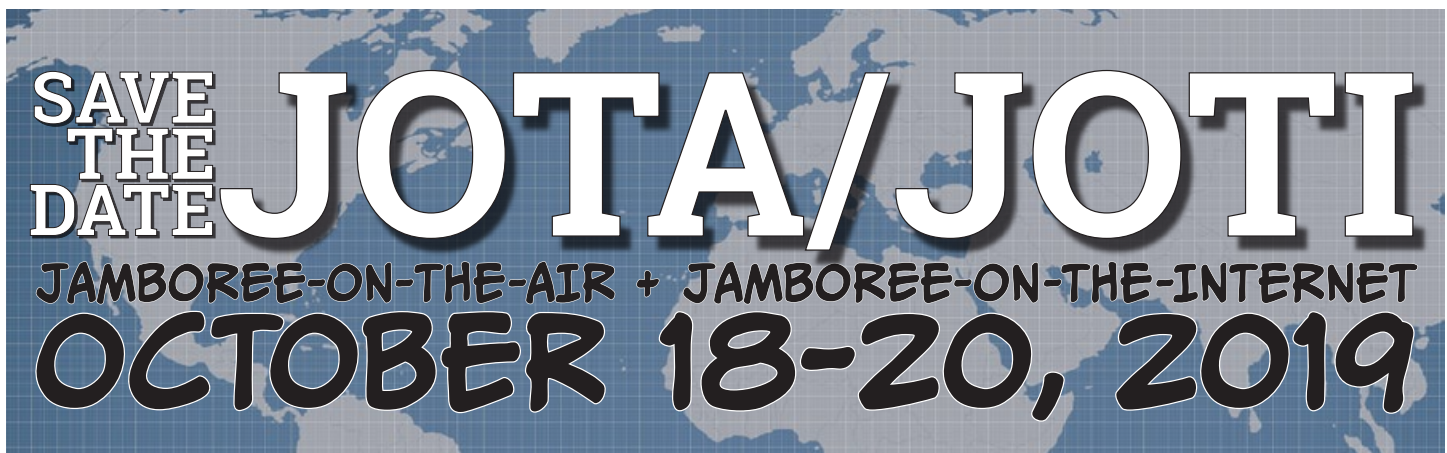
June 9–15	Wood Badge (sponsored by Crossroads of America Council)
June 23–29	NAYLE (Session 1)
July 7–14	NAYLE (Session 2)
Aug. 11–17	Membership Growth Conference
Aug. 18–24	Leave No Trace Master Educator Course
Oct. 13–18	International Scouting Conference
Oct. 14–18	Advanced District Administration
Oct. 14–18	District Operations 2 (DOB2)

Save the date for the Leadership Academy to be held July 19–25, 2020.

After the 2019 World Scout Jamboree (July 22–Aug. 2), the Summit will have completed the Pigott Bunkhouse and Tillerson Building, allowing a one-stop training experience to include climate-controlled housing and on-site dining halls.

If you have any questions, please contact Larry Boggs, director of leadership and conferences at the Summit, at [larry.r.boggs@scouting.org](mailto:larry.r.boggs@scouting.org).

## 2019 Jamboree-on-the-Air and Jamboree-on-the-Internet



Interested in a free international jamboree that you can participate in without leaving home? Check out Jamboree-on-the-Air and Jamboree-on-the-Internet!

JOTA and JOTI will be held October 18–20. JOTA and JOTI are annual world Scouting events that use amateur radios and the internet, respectively, to link Scouts from around the world. This year's theme has not been released yet, so stay tuned!

Want some more reasons to participate in JOTA and JOTI? These events can help Tigers complete part of their Family Stories elective adventure; Webelos complete part of their Arrow of Light adventure Building a Better World; and Scouts, Venturers, and adult leaders complete part of the requirements for the International Spirit Award.

Visit the JOTA webpage ([www.scouting.org/jota](http://www.scouting.org/jota)) and JOTI webpage ([www.scouting.org/joti](http://www.scouting.org/joti)) for information on how to participate, download participation certificates, order this year's patches, and MUCH MORE!

We hope you have lots of fun and success during these exciting events!





# Regional and Area Commissioners

Updated May 2019

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# JTE Key Performance Indicators

The Journey to Excellence Key Performance Indicators from April 2019 can be accessed [here](#).

## Coming Events

### 2019

#### May 29–31

National Annual Meeting and National Executive Board and Committee Meetings

Gaylord Rockies Resort and Convention Center  
Denver, Colorado

#### June 9–15

Week 1–Commissioners Week

- Recruiting and Engaging Commissioners
- Second Century Service
- Starting, Sustaining, and Growing Units
- Strengthening Council Unit Service
- Strengthening District Unit Service
- Strengthening Unit Service

Click [here](#) for more information.

Philmont Training Center

#### July 22–August 2

24th World Scout Jamboree

Summit Bechtel Family National Scout Reserve, West Virginia

#### August 25–27

Commissioner Impact Session: Technology for Commissioners  
Central Region, Crossroads of America Council,  
Indianapolis, Indiana

Click [here](#) for information and registration.

#### October 4–6

Commissioner Impact Session: Delivering a Great College of Commissioner Science

Southern Region, Sam Houston Area Council, Houston, Texas

Click [here](#) for information and registration.

#### November 1–3

Commissioner Impact Session: Recruiting and Engaging Commissioners

Northeast Region, Cradle of Liberty Council,  
Wayne, Pennsylvania

Click [here](#) for information and registration.

