



National Commissioner's Minute

Our Changing World

The coronavirus pandemic has changed our very lives. Six months ago, none of us could have envisioned the impact it would have on each and every one of us. We have lost the ability to move about, lost opportunities to socialize, lost jobs, lost loved ones. But we have not lost Scouting. I continue to be amazed at the ingenuity, creativity and determination of Scouters to Scout on and make sure that Scouting is still a part of young people's lives. You are amazing, and I thank you for all the ways you support and encourage unit leaders. You inspire me.

You have inspired me throughout my tenure as your national commissioner. You have taught me, encouraged me and welcomed me into your councils. A lot has been accomplished for Scouting and unit service over the last two years, and I want to recognize those who made it happen. I have had the opportunity to serve with seven regional commissioners: from the Northeast, Ken King and Linda Baker; from Southern Region, Bill Talley and Gail Plucker; Central Region introduced me to Kandra Dickerson and Mike Weber; and Del Bishop guided Western Region. They served as my cabinet, advising me at every turn, and working hard in their regions supporting you. The National Commissioner Service Team works hard every day to support and enable you to support units. That team has been expanded to better serve you. My thanks go out to Jeff Bostwick, John Cherry, Rick Hillenbrand, Steven Lee, Craig Martin, Mike Moegenburg, Sue Simmons and Darlene Sprague, and the team of national faculty and subject matter experts who work — often behind the scenes — to help you help our units help kids. My thanks also go out to those former service team members who have worked with me in the past: Tim Acree, Kevin Baker, Colleen Chapman and Scott McKenzie. My gratitude knows no depths for the chair, Larry Chase, my conscience, my mentor, my friend.

While I will miss serving you, I am delighted to ask you to welcome Scott Sorrels as your new national commissioner. You already know him as the co-chair and camp chief for the 24th World Jamboree. Many of you were there or visited and got to experience the result of years of dedication Scott gave to that jamboree. All his planning was focused on the kids, what they would experience, what they would want to see. It was a wonderful jamboree, and we all owe him our thanks for that.



Ellie Morrison
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But Scott is not new to unit service, nor is his experience in Scouting limited to it. He served for nine years as the first chair of the National Commissioner Service Team. He has been a key Scouter in Venturing, including serving as vice chair of the National Venturing Committee and founder of Winterfest some 46 years ago; you might see him wearing Venturing green. He has been involved in International Scouting, has served as president of Area 9 in the Southern Region, and continues to serve on our National, Northeast Georgia and Atlanta Area Council boards of directors. Scott's service to youth has been recognized multiple times. He has received the Silver Beaver, Silver Antelope and the Silver Buffalo. Most recently, he has been awarded the Bronze Wolf, the World Organization of Scouting Movement's highest honor.

Scott brings a wealth of knowledge to us. He loves to "find elegant solutions to problems" and he does that with a listening ear, kindness and decisive action. Please join me in welcoming Scott Sorrels, national commissioner.



The New National Commissioner – Scouting Works!

I am honored to serve as the next national commissioner of the Boy Scouts of America. Stating the obvious, it comes at an interesting and transformational time for both our nation and our movement. I know in my heart that Scouters are resilient, and I have great confidence that we will rise to the opportunities of the day. Our movement has given us a wonderful set of standards in the Scout Oath and Law by which we can model our daily lives. Those same standards will help us rise above the near-term challenges. We are all caretakers for a movement that has positively impacted the lives of America's youth for more than 110 years. Our movement has also enriched the lives of millions of adult volunteers and professionals who make the Scouting program possible. Scouting works.

The bylaws description states that "[t]he National Commissioner shall represent the Boy Scouts of America in national affairs, be the chief morale officer of the Boy Scouts of America, and represents the commissioner service team." I look forward to working with Dan Ownby, our incoming chair, and Roger Mosby, our Chief Executive Officer, and our national leadership team in support of the mission of Scouting.

I think that the word "national" is the least important descriptor of my approach to this new role and what it means to be a servant leader. Scouting is local. Every energy of the movement should be geared to making the unit successful. It follows from that fundamental belief that the roles of unit commissioner, Scoutmaster, Cubmaster, Crew Advisor and similar callings are among the most important roles in Scouting. Our methodology should be to refine a simple and unified structure that makes the role of a local volunteer and district executive as easy and as personally rewarding as possible. Sometimes the most effective support we can offer is to empower our local councils, through the voices of our local volunteers and professionals, to figure out how to best deliver Scouting in their community.

The magic of Scouting happens best when we work as a team. I have been blessed by remarkable partnerships with extraordinary professionals and volunteers. Our best team accomplishments, be it the original formation of the Commissioner Service Team or hosting the World Jamboree in "almost heaven" West Virginia, were the result of a shared trust, characterized by transparency and mutual accountability. We are truly blessed that you get to meet and work with the most incredible people in this common cause.



Scott Sorrels
National Commissioner

Together, we will forge the role that we as commissioners and as unit, district and council volunteers will play in this changing world. During my commissioner experience, it has been a privilege to witness the talents of Tico Perez, Charles Dahlquist, and most recently, Ellie Morrison, as our national commissioners. We are forever indebted for their passion and vision. I look forward to working with Larry Chase, who has agreed to continue in his role as the chair of the Commissioner Service Team, and the talented group of regional commissioners and subject matter specialists who exist to support local Scouting. Please share with us your thoughts and vision at commissionerserviceteam@scouting.org on how we can better support your success in Scouting on behalf of America's youth. *Please be sure to include your email address in the body of your message.*

Thank you for all you do for Scouting.

Scott Sorrels



Meet the People

Below is a graphic you probably haven't seen before; you'll be seeing more of it in the future.

Yes, it's centered on a handshake, something we've been seeing a lot less of recently. We might think of a handshake as a physical act, but it can be virtual, too. More years ago than I care to admit, we referred to those tones we heard when we made a dial-up connection to the internet as a "handshake." It was an appropriate term: It meant we were connected.

We've learned a lot in the last few months. One of the most significant lessons is the importance of sustaining social connections while maintaining physical distance – in our personal and professional relationships and in Scouting. Physical distance has preserved physical health for many; social connections are essential to emotional health and the development of the youth we serve. We've also discovered the potential of "virtual Scouting." We've all been learning how we can stay connected using a variety of communication tools: text messaging, conference calls (with and without video), social media, even one-on-one phone calls. We've found volunteers and professionals can continue to meet and plan using those tools. More importantly, the youth we serve can keep on Scouting.

Commissioners used to think that meeting the people was done in unit meetings. We've come to learn the benefits of meeting in a variety of settings: certainly at unit meetings, but also on outings, at camporees, summer camp or in a coffee shop. Today we know we have even more options. At first, virtual meetings will feel just as different as the first contact outside a unit meeting. The methods we can use today, including virtual meetings, are different. But they work. We just need to try them.

Unit service starts with meeting people. It's our path to:

- Building great relationships
- Building networks
- Building stronger units
- Building a great Scouting experience for **every** member of the BSA

When you think of meeting people, you might immediately think of meeting unit leaders. You might be right – if you are a unit commissioner. It's essential that unit commissioners meet regularly with the leaders of the units they serve – to build the relationships needed – based on respect, candor and trust – to maintain an understanding of unit strengths and needs and collaboratively develop plans to strengthen them.



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But there's more to it than that.

Consider this: Scouting has four core functions: membership, program, finance and unit service. Most volunteers focus on only one of those, a few on three. Commissioners are responsible for unit service but must meet volunteers and professionals involved in those other three functions and build relationships with them to be able to serve units effectively.

Recruiting commissioners also involves meeting people – people both inside and outside of Scouting who might be prospects or who might know others who might be.

Commissioners need a broad, deep network of Scouting resources to serve units effectively. Developing that network begins with meeting people for the first time; maintaining it comes from meeting them repeatedly and developing relationships based on respect, candor and trust.

Meet the People. It will help Scouting help kids.



Helpful – Friendly – Courteous – Kind

3 – 4 – 5 – 6

Stop and think about it:

There are two points that come first: Trustworthy and Loyal; there are six that come after: Obedient, Cheerful, Thrifty, Brave, Clean and Reverent.

Commissioners do their best to adhere to all 12 points of the Scout Law. But 3, 4, 5 and 6 are essential to the work we do. Being Helpful, Friendly, Courteous and Kind enable us to build relationships based on respect, candor and trust. We need that kind of relationship with every member of our Scouting network; it is a critical element of our ability to work effectively with the leaders of the units we serve.

Every volunteer member of the BSA is either a Scout or Scouter, regardless of location, economic status, tenure, religion, ethnicity or gender.

Every unit in the BSA is equal, regardless of program, location, economic status or membership served.

Different units “Scout” differently. All might not require members to wear a complete uniform; some might meet all year long while others take breaks for one reason or another; some might offer a “high-adventure” program while others focus on other program opportunities. Those differences might attract different youth and families. Even though they “Scout” differently, all those units are **Scouting** and are members of our movement.

Our movement’s members are human; every one of them doesn’t agree with every policy decision. But as members of our movement, we endorse our Oath, our Law and our values. We do our best to live by them.

3, 4, 5 and 6 are particularly important to our units, too.

“Linked” units aren’t new: Whenever two units (a troop and a pack, a pack and a crew, two troops, etc.) are chartered by the same organization, they are “linked.” Sometimes they are “closely linked” – they share a committee (although each has its own unit leader). Sometimes they are “loosely linked” – they are chartered by the same organization but have separate committees **and** unit

leaders. Regardless, linked units have a unique opportunity to support one another, particularly when one has been in existence and successful for some time and another is new, or one is “on a roll” and the other is dealing with challenges. And while we might not traditionally have thought of units being linked, it’s likely that our charter partners see a natural connection and expect “their” units to support one another.

Support can be provided in many ways:

- Sharing knowledge of Scouting processes and procedures
- Explaining how to develop an annual budget or program plan
- Providing Scoutbook training
- Identifying district and council opportunities to gather information, learn the latest about program developments and opportunities, and network
- Sharing information about local – or remote – program opportunities, whether outdoors or “go see it” locations
- Offering a joint outing
- Sharing equipment

With our decision to welcome young women into Scouts BSA, new opportunities – and new challenges – have arisen. Our existing units can help enable a new unit to be successful. When an existing troop charter organization agrees to charter a female troop, its male troop has a unique opportunity to provide support. Whether those troops are “closely linked” (have a common committee) or not, the male troop’s youth and adults have opportunities to share resources, train, coach, and mentor the leadership and members of the female troop. They can have an impact; they can make a difference.

All 12 points of our Law apply to everything we do in Scouting. 3, 4, 5 and 6 are particularly important as we do our work as commissioners, as we welcome new units to Scouting and especially as we welcome female troops to Scouts BSA.

Transition

You’re likely reading this about the time many of us would have been gathered for our National Annual Meeting. Another example of great planning being disrupted by reality.

It would have been an exciting time. There would have been opportunities to learn the latest about our movement and plans for its future, to learn how to better serve youth through Scouting, and simply to fellowship with others who share Scouting’s values and a commitment to helping kids.

As commissioners, we would have celebrated – and been saddened by – the end of Ellie Morrison’s term as national commissioner. That’s always the case with great leaders: They leave us indebted to them for their service, thankful for the opportunity to work with and share time with them, but regretful that time has come to an end.

We also would have celebrated Scott Sorrels’ return to unit service as our new national commissioner. For many, it is the return of a familiar face, someone who was instrumental in creating the foundation of unit service as we know it today. For those who have not had the opportunity to know Scott, you can be confident we’re in good hands.

And so we lost the opportunity to celebrate both an end and a beginning. But we have an alternative: a virtual celebration. If you’d like to drop a note of thanks to Ellie or of welcome to Scott, please do so. Simply send an email to commissionerserviceteam@scouting.org. Please be sure to include your email in the body of your message. We’ll make sure your thoughts are passed along promptly.



Commissioner Recruiting and Retention at a Distance

Social distancing, shelter in place, quarantine, commissioner recruiting/retention. Wait. What? How does that work?

Our current, temporary social-distancing climate can raise questions about effective commissioner recruiting and retention. For example, how can we recruit if we can't meet with the candidate face to face? Or, don't efforts to retain commissioners require the personal touch?

The fact is that our recruiting and retention efforts don't necessarily have to be done up close and personally. We don't need to put our plans on hold or suspend efforts to increase our commissioner teams. With some creativity, outside-the-box thinking and a little adjustment, this social-distancing experience can still facilitate recruiting and retaining commissioners.

Here are some ideas for using this unique time to advance your commissioner recruiting and retention plans:

1. Develop a Recruiting/Retention Strategy: In certain ways, this sheltered environment presents you some "downtime" opportunities to evaluate your council or district commissioner recruiting and retention efforts. In turn, this self-assessment will cause you to ask key, and maybe hard, questions. For instance, what are you doing to increase the number of your unit-serving commissioners? Are you losing more commissioners than gaining? Does your commissioner corps reflect the diversity of your community? Do you have commissioners servicing the unique needs of your all-female Scouts BSA troops, linked Scouts BSA troops or packs with girls? The answers to such questions will lead to strategies concerning recruiting and retaining commissioners in your council.

2. Create a Plan: Use this time to write commissioner recruiting and retention plans. Many times, our recruiting plans involve sending an email or text to a Scouting friend to fill a hole in our commissioner org charts. Similarly, our retention plans are often limited to asking someone to extend their service while we "look" for a replacement.

Instead of these ad hoc and often last-minute approaches, we can make more progress with a comprehensive written plan, complete with goals, progress points, due dates and work delegation strategies. In other words, written plans framed around SMART goals best advance our recruiting efforts, and those plans can be crafted while we shelter in place.

3. Build the Team: Rather than trying to do it all alone, we need help. You should use this time to think about a team to help you. If you are a council commissioner, maybe it's your district commissioners and BSA professional partner(s). If you are a district commissioner, perhaps your team consists of your ADC, unit commissioners and district executive. Whatever the team's makeup, now is the time to build your team.



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4. Communicate With the Team: This is an ideal time to have team meetings. Many of your team members can't go to work or school. With the cancellation or postponement of Scouting or non-Scouting meetings/activities, your team members have fewer scheduling conflicts. Virtual meeting platforms, such as Zoom or Skype, will enable you to meet with your team at a distance more times than before. During the meetings, recruiting/retention plans can be discussed, goals can be set and team development can occur. Almost anything you can do in person can be done over the internet with less time, expense and risk.

These steps will help continue your efforts to recruit and retain your commissioners during this time of home-based Scouting. Now is not the time to take a break, let off the gas, or stop your efforts to build and enhance your commissioner corps. Instead, wise use of this time can enhance your recruiting and retention efforts with carefully developed strategies, plans and team development. Stay tuned. We will discuss details of solid recruiting and retention approaches in future issues of *The Commissioner*. Until then, charge ahead with your commissioner recruiting and retention efforts because social distancing and commissioner recruiting/retention can work together.



Meeting the People

Unit service is all about making a positive impact on units. You need to have a relationship with your unit to make that impact. Of course, the best way to build a relationship is to meet. Face to face, with or without coffee, is the best way to go. As your relationship grows, so do your opportunities to communicate.

Let's not limit meeting the people to the top unit leader. Do you attend committee meetings? This is where the unit should be solving problems and planning the detailed execution of plans (or that of the patrol leader's council). Your impact can multiply here, if you are able to listen to what the issues are and ask good questions to help them change course without giving them directives.

There are other opportunities to Meet the People. If you attend unit meetings or activities, you can meet the parents. They might have questions that they chose not to share with the committee or provide a perspective on the unit that the unit leader and committee might not choose to share.

Of course, communication is not complete when you Meet the People. You need to communicate, in Commissioner Tools, the meaningful information you learned as you met with the top unit leaders, the unit committee or unit parents.



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Communicating With New Units

All new units need increased communication from their commissioner. Starting a new unit is hard. It also takes extra work to ensure that the unit grows and thrives. The same is true for packs that are changing by adding girls to their program. Both types of units need the help and support of an advisor and guide. In order to meet increased needs for help, your communication should be more frequent with them than with established, high-performing units. Instead of a goal of contact once a month, there will need to be phone calls, texts and emails to keep up contact throughout the month.

We need to realize that when working with a new unit, we have the responsibility to listen to them, pay attention to them, and attempt to understand what it is they need and want.

Honest listening is at the heart of building a trusting relationship that can benefit all parties. To lead well, invest energy in listening so you can assess the situation, figure out what is really missing and then help them to figure out how to fulfill that need. So an important rule to remember might be: "Don't just do something! Stand there."

Listening is important as we work with the unit leadership to create a unit-service plan based on a detailed collaborative assessment. As part of unit leadership development, sit back and let the unit own the process. They will develop as a high-functioning team more quickly if you do. Think of yourself as a symphony conductor – you start the process, you end the process, you make adjustments along the way, but remember that the instrumentalists make the music.

One key element to communicate with new units is that they are not alone. They have the help and support of both a district and a council to answer their questions and help them move forward. You are part of the team, so feel free to share your knowledge of Scouting processes and procedures. Make sure that you provide Scoutbook training or get a district expert to help them. You can link them to other units so they can enjoy a joint outing.



Introducing the Communications Team

Commissioners have used social media for several years, and I would like to introduce our social media team to you:

Adam R. Cox, Moderator – Adam serves as district commissioner for the Skyloo District in the Cascade Pacific Council; assistant council commissioner covering communications, charters and JTE, as well as a trainer for the council and district.

Ben Ward, Moderator – Ben is an assistant Scoutmaster with Troop 555 in Mechanicsville, Va. He is also an assistant district commissioner for Battlefield District of the Heart of Virginia Council. He has served on the 2013 and 2017 National Scout Jamboree Registration Team and on the 2019 World Scout Jamboree Registration Team.

Bob Fish, Moderator – Bob serves on the national committee as the Summit Staff Association (SBRSA) Central Region representative and communications chair. He has served as district commissioner and assistant council commissioner, and he mentors doctoral candidates at the College of Commissioner Science. Bob was a subcamp commissioner at the National Jamboree, and he also serves as a course director for the American Red Cross Wilderness First Aid.

Emily Campbell, Moderator – Emily is currently serving as the assistant council commissioner for roundtables in Tecumseh Council and has served as a commissioner in multiple councils. She was part of the team that wrote the Bachelors and Masters Roundtable tracks for the College of Commissioner Science as well as teaching the Effective Roundtables course at The Philmont Training Center for several years. Emily also works with a team to write the Philmont Cub Scout Roundtable Supplements.

Griffin Roblyer, Moderator – Griffin currently serves as an assistant district commissioner with National Capital Area Council. He previously served as a district commissioner for Tidewater Council.

We have built our team beyond social media to include other areas. Here are two additional team members:

Bruce Levitt, Photographer – Bruce is currently a district vice chair of a 5,000-member district in St. Louis. Former head of University of Scouting, lodge advisor and national OA photo advisor. He is active in many Scouting activities from unit Eagle Scout coach to district and council training activities.

Jeffrey H. Goldsmith, Commissioner Webinars – Jeff is the council president of the Jersey Shore Council and a past area commissioner of Area 5 in the Northeast Region. Jeff has hosted 12 one-hour commissioner webinars, and counting, on a variety of topics. Jeff also serves on the national Scouts BSA Committee, national STEM in Scouting Committee, national OA Subcommittee, national Jewish Committee on Scouting and the national Religious Relationships Taskforce. Jeff continues to serve as his son's troop committee chair and as a unit commissioner.



Doesn't Everybody Have Broadband Internet?

Now that most of us are practicing social distancing in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the need to Meet the People from a distance is greater than ever before – not just for Scouting, but for school, work and even keeping in touch with friends and family. There are lots of ways to Meet the People and when you think of modern technology, most people think of the internet. Depending on which source you use, over 99.7% of the U.S. population has **access** to broadband internet, but the average home download speed is only 6.7 MBps.

If you look further into the data, what the above statistics are not saying is that approximately 8,000 youth and adult members of the BSA do not even have broadband access. In 2015 the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) revised the definition of broadband, increasing the minimum download speeds from 4 MBps to 25 MBps. Obviously, if the average home download speed is only 6.7 MBps, then way more than half of the U.S. isn't getting broadband delivery to their homes that reaches the FCC's threshold of acceptable home broadband internet service. So what gives? The answer lies in the details.

It is all about broadband "access" – not what is being delivered. Thanks to satellite internet service technology, if you look at a broadband coverage map of the U.S., you will see that 100% of 49 of the 50 states have access to broadband as defined by the FCC, with Alaska at 67% coverage being the exception (source: www.broadbandnow.com). But there are additional details to actually having internet content delivered to your device, the first of which being "at what cost?"

Some might ask, "Why all the detail about broadband internet access in the U.S.?" The answer is because as nice as broadband internet access is – when you actually have it – there still remain large numbers of Americans and Scouting families that don't have broadband internet **delivered** to their homes. According to Pewresearch.org, in 2019 17% of adults in the U.S. **did not** use broadband at home (but did own smartphones) (source: <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/fact-sheet/internet-broadband/>). Armed with this information, now we can examine our Scouting internet communication behavior. Some of the things we can do:

1. Start simple so you don't lose anybody. Start with email or something similar before going to video.
2. Don't send large attachments via email unless you know ALL the recipients have good internet.
 - a. The typical photo taken with a digital camera is over 5 MB – and some are as large as 12 MB! Cellphone photos typically exceed 2 MB. Unless the recipient really needs such a high-resolution image, send a lower-resolution copy. Using the Microsoft Office Picture Manager, pictures can be set at a lower resolution.
 - b. Picture- and video-laden PowerPoint presentations are often among the worst offenders when it comes to oversized files. Did you know that in PowerPoint you can either individually, or in bulk, compress the images? Here is a link to "6 Ways to Reduce PowerPoint File Size": <https://nutsandboltspeedtraining.com/powerpoint-tutorials/compress-powerpoint/>



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3. If you are sending a video by email, consider converting large AVI and MOV videos to an efficient and super-compressed MP4 format. A free video conversion software application that I like to use is Freemake Video Converter found at www.freemake.com.

4. Send an Adobe PDF file instead of a Word document.

When creating a PDF document, try to avoid scanning the document as a PDF file, which sometimes actually ends up making a larger file. Most Microsoft Office applications will directly create a PDF file as a "Save As" option. For example, my picture-laden 2019 Christmas letter was a 39.5 MB Word document that converted to an 857KB PDF file with no noticeable image degradation (2.2% of the original size).

5. Rather than send an attachment, especially if not everyone is likely to open it, consider storing it in the cloud with Google Drive or similar, and just send the link.

Dropbox and other similar large file-sharing applications are particularly useful if you need to share a file to work on it collaboratively or if the file is too large to get through an email client gateway. (Typical email client gateways even for broadband providers is about 25 MB for the entire email and all attachments.)

6. Don't forget about the ability to ZIP (super compress) large files. There are dozens of compression applications available these days; here is a list of 7 that work on both Windows and Mac machines: <https://fossbytes.com/best-file-compression-software/>

Remember, to protect users from hidden malicious code, some organizations don't allow files with certain extensions to be attached to an email being received,



especially .zip files. So you might have to resort to the age-old trick of renaming the file from something like “sample.zip” to “sample.xyz” and let the recipient of the email know what you did.

7. Only consider video meetings and conferences when you are certain everyone has the ability to participate. Also, providing a telephone dial-in option is useful for those without sufficient internet capability to support video conferencing.

There is a lot of information and BSA guidance about video conferencing, and a good starting place for commissioners is at <https://www.scouting.org/commissioners/news-for-commissioners/>. If you are going to conduct video conferences with Scouts (youth), make sure that you are familiarized with BSA’s applicable Youth Protection Guidelines.

Supporting New Unit Leaders With Technology

As a Scouter, being “helpful” (to everyone) isn’t optional; to quote a famous comedian, “It’s the law!” So I would expect that experienced Scouters, whom commissioners tend to be, would readily volunteer to help new Scouters. Obviously, a new unit – which we define as one that is less than 36 months old – is one of the most likely places to find new Scout leaders who could benefit with an offer of friendly help, and with the advent of female Scouts, BSA units opportunity abounds.

As a group, commissioners are fairly tech savvy when compared to the average populace, so don’t assume that you don’t have some helpful technology knowledge that is worth sharing. For example, when you use a my.Scouting application and things aren’t working right in your browser, what is the first thing we advise people to do? Clear cache! But can you remember when you were trying to figure out “What is cache?” Or as a commissioner, how about helping a new leader and their workload with the features of Organization Security Manager that allow a Key 3 leader to delegate authority through the use of functional assignments? (See image.) Don’t forget to remind unit leaders that delegations in Organizational Security Manager expire automatically when the charter expires (if an earlier date is not selected).

If you have a real penchant for technology, perhaps you could make an extra effort to help the new leaders you interact with and offer to become a mentor. In an article I recently read, it states, “Mentors and sponsors are critical for career advancement – and in the tech world, men are 50% more likely than women to have a mentor or sponsor who can help guide their career path and support them in seeking out new opportunities.” The difference between a mentor, who informally coaches the mentee, and a sponsor is that sponsors are in a position where they can intentionally devise opportunities to provide the individual greater visibility with senior leaders and help them expand the perception of what they can do. As commissioners, think of how often you are in a position to make a critical introduction of a promising new leader to someone in a senior leadership position.

Another way we can support Scout leaders of new units is to keep in contact with the unit and communicate with them frequently. Of course, if appropriate, log the contact in Commissioner Tools.

As a final note, in support of some of the new women Scout leaders who might be interested in technology, make sure they are aware of resources beyond Scouting such as Women in Technology.

The screenshot shows the my.Scouting Organization Security Manager interface. At the top, it says "Organization Security Manager" and "my.Scouting". Below this, it displays "Pack 0032 Romney 1st United Methodist Church". There are two tabs: "Organization Details" (selected) and "Roster". Under "Organization Details", there are two sections: "Key 3 Members" and "Functional Positions".

Key 3 Members	Functional Positions
Chartered Organization Rep. Clark William Blaha	Key 3 Delegate
Committee Chairman Frederick Frank Hillenbrand III	Registration Inquiry
Cubmaster Kent Eugene Wagoner	Unit Advancement Chair
	Unit Training Chair
	Youth Protection Champion



Virtual Impact Session

This issue of *The Commissioner* has a focus on Meet the People. Our National Development Conferences – both weeklong and weekend Impact Sessions – are great vehicles for meeting new people who share a common purpose.

The COVID-19 pandemic is causing a great deal of change in our everyday lives. While there are many negatives related to this, we have also seen a great deal of innovation in many areas.

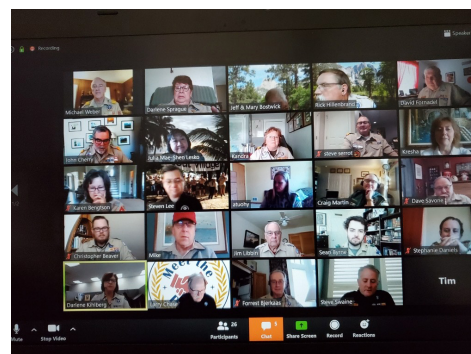
The development team has created a new vehicle for delivering in-person training – The Virtual Impact Session. On April 18, 2020, a pilot was conducted for this concept. Twenty-six participants were actively engaged in this pilot. We were able to have content delivery, facilitate discussion and reinforce activities. We will be adding Virtual Impact Sessions to our content delivery portfolio later this year.

We are still planning to have the “normal” impact sessions later this year.

Look for more communication regarding this new, innovative development opportunity where we will continue to be able to Meet the People.



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Curriculum Feedback Process

The National Commissioner Service Team is responsible for providing curriculum for Commissioner Basic Training and material for the College of Commissioner Science. This year, we are implementing a feedback process. A dedicated email account has been created for you to submit any and all feedback:

Commissionerdevelopment@scouting.org

Commissioners are welcome to submit any feedback on the supported curriculum that they deem appropriate, including error corrections, suggestions for new topics, etc. Members of the Curriculum Review Team will monitor this email account and determine what changes will be implemented.



“Meet the People”

The “Meet the People” logo reminds all of us of the importance of making connections. Until recently, when we would say “Meet the People,” the majority of us would think of a face-to-face meeting. We would Meet the People at roundtable, a unit meeting or event, or any gathering of volunteers, staff or people from the community. This is the way most commissioners Meet the People. Unit commissioners seek to develop and build relationships based on respect, candor and trust. This enables them to assess the unit’s needs and help the unit develop a unit service plan to grow stronger. While social distancing due to COVID-19, we all needed to count on “virtual Scouting” to reach out and Meet the People.

When faced with virtual Scouting as the only means of connecting, unit commissioners need to reach out to our unit leaders, chartering partners, parents and district committee members more than ever. I took this as an opportunity to meet and engage more of our Scouting families and those in the community. I understand that some of us might not be tech savvy, but now is the time to think outside of the box. I am sure many of us have attended Zoom meetings and conference calls, but how many of us have our own accounts to make virtual connections? Now is the time to reach out to our colleagues who are technically savvy and ask them to share their expertise. We need to continue to be a resource for our units and develop trusting relationships that go beyond the face-to-face meeting we are accustomed to.

Reaching out and staying connected to serve our units is vital to their success. I was amazed how quickly virtual Scouting happened. Within days of social distancing, we could see how many councils, districts and units were continuing the Scouting program through virtual Scouting. The News for Commissioners webpage announced information about virtual Scouting: <https://www.scouting.org/commissioners/news-for-commissioners/> I also heard from unit leaders that they had no idea what they should do. Connecting with unit leaders and helping them find resources they could use for unit meetings and sharing Facebook and other social media outlets gave them helpful information; so did the Scouting at Home site: <https://www.scouting.org/scoutingathome/>

On a personal note, I received my first invitation to Scoutbook to be a merit badge counselor and I also have my own Zoom account. Continue connecting with our units, district, council and community. Meet the People by building your relationships, your network and your Scouting experience.



Sue Simmons
*National Commissioner Service
Starting and Sustaining Units Chair*
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Supporting Female Leaders and Linked Troops

The BSA's Diversity & Inclusion Statement

The Boy Scouts of America promotes a culture where each youth, volunteer and employee feels a sense of belonging and builds communities where every person feels respected and valued.

Leading by example and encouraging each other to live by the values expressed by the Scout Oath and Scout Law, we welcome families of all backgrounds to help prepare young people to serve as successful members and leaders of our nation's increasingly diverse communities.

Female leadership has come a long way from the den mother role in 1936 to being a Scoutmaster in 1988 and to having our first female national commissioner, Ellie Morrison, in 2018. In 2019, we welcomed female Scouts into Scouts BSA with female Scout troops. These female troops can be standalone with their own troop committee or a linked troop of two troops – one for males and one for females that share a chartered organization and may share some or all of the troop committee members, with each having its own Scoutmaster. Diversity, inclusion and equality are a part of the fabric of Scouting, and commissioners facilitate a cooperative atmosphere to achieve a great Scouting experience for every member of the BSA.

The unit commissioner for the linked troops can foster this cooperative atmosphere by being an advocate of training for all leadership. This should include the Guide to Safe Scouting, Hazardous Weather Training and Journey to Excellence training, to name a few. The commissioner could offer to clarify how

linked troops operate independently with a common charter partner, troop committee and resources. This presentation will allow everyone the chance to ask questions and receive answers. It is fundamental to foster a mentoring relationship between the new leadership and the experienced leadership. The unit commissioner can guide that relationship. Having new member coordinators can play a very important role in welcoming the leaders, youth and parents of the linked troops. Let us not forget about roundtable, where the unit commissioner can aid the new leaders with finding district committee resources, networking and finding other female troop leaders. A unit commissioner can best serve linked troops by maintaining a consistent message, just as having one charter partner and one troop committee.

Everyone wants to belong and feel welcome, respected and valued when they are a part of Scouting. This includes leaders, youth and parents. Commissioners facilitate a cooperative atmosphere to achieve a great Scouting experience for every member of the BSA. The following resources will help you better serve your linked troops:

<https://skcscouts.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Starting-Linked-Troop.pdf>

<https://www.scouting.org/familyscouting/>

<https://scoutingwire.org/marketing-and-membership-hub/councils/new-member-coordinator/>

<https://www.scouting.org/about/diversity-inclusion/>



National Wood Badge and Linked Troops



My wife and I were privileged to participate in January's first national Wood Badge course at Summit Bechtel Reserve. We had planned to attend our regional course, but we simply couldn't resist this unique weeklong opportunity, especially as it would model linked male and female troops.

The National Model Course (BSA-20-1), which will serve as the basis for regularly occurring council-level courses, was the first to showcase new updates to the curriculum

and offer concurrent training to two 56-member single-gender troops (112 participants total), overseen and supported by a common committee. As usual, each troop had its own troop guides, patrol leader structure and patrols based on the Gilwell critters. Also as usual, the days were jam-packed and challenged every part of our being and thinking. Nothing is quite as draining yet fulfilling as a day of Wood Badge.

While much about the curriculum would feel familiar to anyone with previous Wood Badge experience, the National Model Course featured some new themes, leadership competencies, course content and delivery methods. Over 25 national-level trainers attended as instructors, as well as several authors of the new modules. All made a concerted effort during breaks and meals to meet the motivated, committed Scouters who came to learn.



So how did the linked troops work out? Both troops were a rich blend of those with experience in Cub Scouts, Scouts BSA, Venturing and Sea Scouting. Some were newer in their roles and sought the group's collective wisdom; many were long-time Scouters but perhaps new to welcoming girls into their units or districts. While the two troops had several opportunities to learn together, they often spent time in separate locations learning the same material but with different instructors. The unique delivery model – and some of the conversations and insights that emerged from it – highlighted the need for all Scouters to not only support the integration of girls into all levels of the program, but to also actively work to create environments that position all Scouts for success.



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The true measure of this course's success will be the same as it is for any Wood Badge course: the local impact of the participants' ticket items. The linked troop model no doubt gave rise to goals that embrace the culture change of girls claiming their place in Scouting, allowing them to make contributions to the program and ensuring that they feel a sense of belonging from every part of the movement. Equipped with the new Wood Badge curriculum to guide their understanding and implementation, Scouters are already sowing seeds in communities all over the country ... and the world.

Both my wife and I consider this course one of the best training experiences we've ever been through. It was transformative in improving our leadership skills in both Scouting and our regular vocations. So many of Wood Badge's touch points are applicable to what we each do in Scouting, and everything points back to the purpose and practice of serving youth within the BSA. It's about planting acorns in the lives of our Scouts so we can leave a lasting legacy in the work we do with the young people we serve. Going forward, this course sets a precedent for all Wood Badge courses in preparing leaders for family Scouting across all programs. As part of the commissioner team, I am particularly proud that BSA is committed to delivering training that supports the goal of making Scouting welcoming and inclusive for all Scouts and their families.

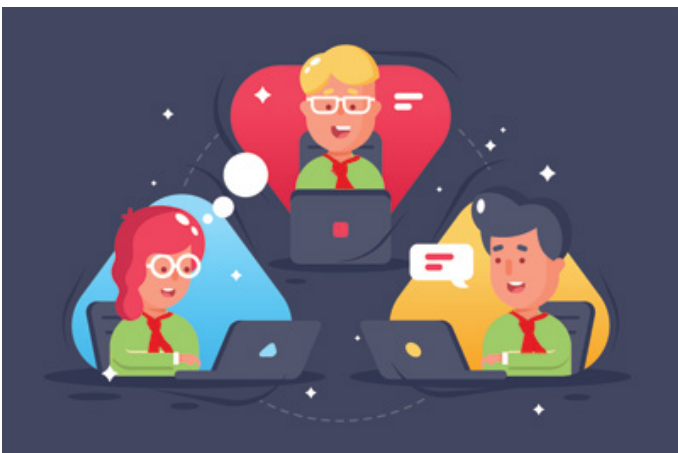


Meeting the People in Virtual Space



As mentioned in my other article, both my wife and I were blessed to have experienced the National Wood Badge at Summit Bechtel Reserve in January. We had the wonderful opportunity to meet so many Scouters from across the country with diverse experiences and backgrounds. At the same time, we were extremely privileged to have national staff members on the instructional team helping us go through the new Wood Badge material.

Reflecting on that week, we the participants went through an amazing transformation of learning, growing and bonding with everyone there. Those relationships did not end at the Summit but have continued to flourish on **virtual space** through Facebook friendship and groups, Zoom conferences and emails. We began interacting with one another in the virtual world before we even left West Virginia, collaborating on all things Scouting while indirectly building our bonds of friendship. Virtual space has allowed us to share ideas with one another that transcend geography, time zones, bad weather and social boundaries.



Then one day, the world changed all around us when COVID-19 landed on our shores, and suddenly schools, work, social gatherings, sporting events and religious services were shut down to maintain social distancing and flatten the curve. Every Scout unit was looking at its calendar and sending out cancellation notices for all pack/troop/crew/ship gatherings for at least a month. This included upcoming Webelos bridging, courts of honor, camping activities and outdoor adventures that were planned months in advance.

Within a day of the national mandate to stay at home, Scouters started communicating with each other on Facebook about how to continue Scouting activities at home and in virtual conference rooms. Many of us with teleconferencing experience started advising our councils, districts and units on the need to continue meeting in virtual space. In a matter of a week, we started seeing Zoom den meetings, unit meetings, virtual merit badge classes, virtual boards of review, digital campfires, committee meetings and roundtables taking place. National BSA committees started hosting Zoom webinars extolling the benefits of these changes to a nationwide audience of Scouters seeking guidance and ideas. Interest in making greater use of Scoutbook grew, as did concern for advancement and merit badge completion in a virtual world.



Going forward, we do not know how long this situation will continue, but with virtual meetings being the new normal, this will be a positive transformation for the business of Scouting long after. As unit commissioners, we now have a new communication/collaboration tool to **Meet the People**. Many unit leaders are going to need our guidance as they try to run their first virtual meetings or help their Scouts meet adjusted guidelines. Fortunately, there is a lot of help out there with published resources and how-to videos, including recordings of actual virtual unit meetings. As the commissioner corps, let's continue the business of helping unit leaders provide a great program to youth, even in **virtual space**.





Latest Program Updates for the Commissioner Corps

Here are the spring 2020 updates within each of the BSA program communities to help our commissioners corps stay on top of current news, training and program changes. Some BSA programs have their own update websites, so we will point you directly to them. Given the challenges of the current COVID-19 pandemic, the commissioner website under [Program Support Resources](#) contains the latest resource links on conducting **virtual meetings** and how to maintain **Scouting@Home**.

Cub Scouts

1. How Cub Scouting Continues in our Current Circumstances

With the COVID-19 outbreak, we have had to pivot and help families complete the program year and youth finish their quests to earn their rank badges. Here are a few things to help ensure that all our Cub Scouts complete their Adventures and are enthusiastic for the next program year:

- Many councils and units have created **digital den meetings**. They are posting on social media: Facebook and Instagram. The Bryan on Scouting blog has also posted a number of articles on hosting digital den meetings. These resources and more can be found on the Commissioners Program Support Resources page. And they are at the very top, so you do not have to search!
- If a unit is using **Scoutbook**, parents should be encouraged to download the mobile Scouting app. It is available for both iPhone and Android. The app pulls advancement data directly from Scoutbook. Parents can see what their child needs to finish. Please note that this is not the Den Leader Experience app. This app is designed for viewing advancement, not to learn how to complete the Adventure in a den setting.
- Cub Scouts may continue to work on their current den's **advancement through July 31, 2020**. This is to provide any additional time a Cub Scout needs to complete their badge of rank; if they earn their badge of rank prior to July 31, 2020, they may advance to the next rank.
- In addition, parents and other adults in the Cub Scout's family may sign off on **Webelos and Arrow of Light requirements**. We strongly encourage parents to use the Scouting app or Scoutbook to record completion of their child's requirements.
- For those youth trying to complete their **Arrow of Light**:
 - The **Outdoor Adventure** does not require an overnight camping experience. Option A requires setting up a tent but does not require staying overnight. Option B requires an outdoor activity. You may complete either option with your family.

- For the **Scouting Adventure**, a troop meeting may be attended online. You can practice the patrol method with a virtual den meeting and function as a patrol. Elect a patrol leader, pick a patrol and play a virtual game together. Be creative and "Do Your Best."

Our job as adult volunteer leaders is to ensure that the youth in a program have fun and learn something along the way. We must also remember that these kids are young and do not fully comprehend why they must do everything to an adult's exacting measures to be awarded. That is why the Cub Scout motto is **Do Your Best**. We are measuring the effort.

2. Seeking Feedback for Program Improvements in 2021

In anticipation of the **Cub Scout handbooks** being updated for the 2021-2022 program year, all program elements, Adventures and awards are being reviewed. Three awards have already been discontinued by the Program Development Committee: National Den Award, Scout Strong and Conservation Good Turn.

To better serve our families, we need to know what they are thinking. Since November, each time the Preview Adventure, [Protect Yourself Rules](#), is completed, a link to a survey seeking feedback is sent. The information gathered has been invaluable not only to the BSA, but also to the Barbara Sinatra Children's Center, creators of the video series and youth protection experts.

In April we launched our [Adventures Feedback](#) survey. We are asking parents and den leaders to tell us how they feel about each Adventure and the associated requirements. This feedback will help guide us as we review required and elective Adventures. The survey will be ongoing, a continuing effort to hear from our program users.

And finally, we also launched our **Awards and More Survey** to a random sampling of Cub Scout families. Data being gathered is wide ranging: from when den meetings are held in the summer, if at all, to den flag usage. Volunteers are asked about each award currently used by the Cub Scout program. We also want to know how they feel about the current recognition regalia.

Decisions made about potential updates to the Cub Scout program will be based on the answers in these surveys in addition to other data-driven facts. We need to know what families currently in the program are doing and how they feel about what we offer so our program fits their needs.



Scouts BSA

1. PTC Week 8, July 26 – August 1, 2020 (Northeast Region Week)

The plan is to hold two (2) conference sessions during the week. During Session I, Scouters will have the option of attending the **Scouts BSA, Sea Scouting** or **Venturing** conference. Participants will have the option of attending the **Delivering the Promise to Older Youth** conference during Session II.

During the conference week, the Mountain Trek program (which runs all week) will include Kodiak training. It is anticipated that, as a part of the session II conference, the class will meet up with the Kodiak participants in the Philmont backcountry. Participants will have the option of bringing older youth from their units to attend this Trek.

2. Check out **Scouts BSA** updates for more information: <https://www.scouting.org/programs/scouts-bsa/program-updates/>

a. Go to [Skipper Small Keelboat Course](#).

b. Click the **Register for this Course** button.

c. Enter information. In section 2, note where it says “If you have been given a promotion code from a sailing school or charter company click here.” Click the “click here” and enter the promotion code (see below). The price will drop from \$40 to a special Sea Scouts price of \$19.90.

d. After payment, the course will be shown under the Curriculum button. There will also be a bonus of 2 other free courses in your curriculum.

e. On the site, anytime you see a [?], tap it. It will give you further information about that area.

There is a promotional discount for Sea Scouts and Sea Scouters that can be found on SeaScout.org. Please respect the generosity of NauticEd.org in offering this to our Sea Scouts and don't share the promo code outside the program.

4. [Scoutbook for Sea Scouting](#): If you have questions about using Scoutbook for Sea Scouting, the best resource is their forum.

Sea Scouts

1. What Does a Sea Scout Ship Do? The program of a Sea Scout ship is based on matching the interests of members with the skills, equipment and resources of the chartered organization. Most ships follow the traditional advancement program found in the Sea Scout Manual. The ship's program follows the customs and traditions of the sea and encourages members to earn the ranks of Apprentice, Ordinary, Able and Quartermaster (equivalent to the Scouts BSA Eagle rank).

2. 2019 Quartermaster Class: Scouting recognized 35 new Quartermasters in 2019! This number is slightly higher than the average number of QMs over the last 12 years. Quartermasters by state: California: 11, Connecticut: 2, Florida: 3, Illinois: 1, Maine: 1, Michigan: 1, North Carolina: 1, New York: 3, Texas: 8, Virginia: 1, Washington: 3. Don't see your state listed? Get out and Meet the People in your districts and councils to find out where your Sea Scout ships are located and whether a commissioner is assigned. No ships in your area? This is the perfect opportunity to work with your Scouting volunteers and professionals to start a ship!

3. Online Training Opportunity for Sea Scouts/Sea Scouters NauticEd.org is an online training company focused on sailors. One of our Sea Scout Skippers brought them to the attention of National Commodore T.W. Cook. They have a 15-hour course to prepare you to operate a small keelboat (20 ft or so) that has a lot of great content in it that corresponds well to Sea Scout advancement. It includes some good in-depth coverage of topics like weather, too. The course is normally about \$40, but they're offering a limited-time discount code for Sea Scout youth and their immediate families, making the course \$19.90. If you'd like to take advantage of this offer, follow these instructions:



National Disability Awareness

1. The most recent brochure for working with Scouts with special needs and disabilities is available from the BSA website: <https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/510-071.pdf>
2. The BSA Disability Awareness Committee maintains a separate webpage of its own with recent updates: <https://www.scouting.org/programs/scouts-bsa/disabilities-awareness/>



Our “Meet the People” Theme from an Exploring Perspective

I was very pleased with the National Commissioner Service Team’s choice of “Meet the People” for our 2020 theme because it aligns perfectly with my continual call for unit service to our Exploring clubs and posts! Our theme actually echoes the BSA “Introduction to Unit Service,” which emphasizes, “There should be meaningful contact between a commissioner and the adult leadership of assigned unit(s) as often as necessary (but at least monthly). These contacts help build a relationship with the unit, help the commissioner know the condition of the unit(s) and to provide tangible help to the unit’s leadership.” This is reinforced in the BSA Unit Service Plan, which explains, “Relationships are the foundation of effective collaboration; in fact, relationships are the foundation of effective unit service.” And these relationships cannot be established without regular meetings with our Exploring unit advisors and committee members. We have 4,450 Exploring units nationwide, and many are in need of unit service and a welcoming relationship with our councils and districts. I encourage our council and district commissioners to provide unit service for, and relationship building with, their Exploring units as their own limited commissioner resources allow and to continue recruiting both Exploring service team members as well as unit commissioners for their Exploring units. Also, I remind you that our BSA unit commissioners do not need to register as Exploring adults to support their Exploring units; however, Exploring service team members have to register as BSA adults to support traditional BSA units because of the Duty to God membership requirement. To help you reach out to your councils’ and districts’ Exploring units, let me answer some of your questions concerning BSA unit commissioner support to these units.

• **Does a unit commissioner have to be experienced with the career field of the club/post in which he/she is servicing?** In servicing clubs/posts, it may be helpful to allow unit commissioners to service those units who are working in the same or related careers or have past experience in the career field in which the club/post is specializing. This would give the unit commissioner a distinct advantage in being able to build relationships and credibility and instantly relate to the leadership within the unit. That said, remember, the post advisors are already very knowledgeable or experts in their chosen career fields; therefore, unit commissioners might simply need to help them translate their career knowledge from an adult to a youth level that is fun, hands-on and interactive.

• **Should a unit commissioner wear the Scouting uniform when visiting an Exploring unit?** We all know that building relationships is a key component to servicing units. Unit commissioners should consider how their Exploring unit leaders and youth are dressed when making a decision for his/her own dress. With each post/club, this will vary greatly. Therefore, in most cases, a Scouting uniform may not be appropriate. For example, when I visit the law enforcement post that I provide unit service to, I wear an Exploring polo shirt.



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• **Is service to Exploring units different from Scouting units?** Yes. Therefore, unit commissioners who service Exploring units should complete the Servicing Exploring Units training module. I also highly recommend that they take the Exploring Service Team Modules training at my.scouting.org.

By the way, a great approach for making Meet the People a reality is encouraging our councils and districts to reach out and invite their Exploring units to participate in their events. While they have different policies, there are numerous occasions when Exploring units and BSA units may participate in mutual events, as long as they each follow their own appropriate guidelines, especially those regarding safety. Explorers may take part in a variety of BSA activities, community service events and outdoor activities such as camporees, jamborees, parades, CPR training, merit badges, usage of BSA properties and many more. Also, for those councils with sufficient Exploring units, they might consider having Exploring theme events or, for those councils with few Exploring units, consider having senior youth program events, which include Venturers, Sea Scouts and Explorers. By actively embracing Exploring units, we create a real win-win opportunity in growing council and district membership of both our BSA and Exploring units, which will, in turn, better serve a greater cross-section of the youth in our communities.



Supporting Women in Exploring

Although girl members in Cub Scouts (in 2018) and Scouts BSA (in 2019) is relatively new, Exploring welcomed them as full members in 1971, closely followed by Sea Scouts in 1972, and Venturing was coed from its founding in 1998. So as you see, our older youth/young adult BSA and Exploring programs have been coed for decades. And, in turn, all three programs' units have been successfully mentored by both male and female adult leaders/advisors throughout those decades.

Since the emphasis of this article concerns Exploring, I want to "toot our horn" again and point out that Exploring has been coed for almost 50 years. And we welcomed young ladies into the program when we were still one of the traditional BSA programs in 1971. In 1998, Exploring became solely focused on career opportunities and was moved under Learning for Life (and became a BSA affiliate program). It was moved under Learning for Life because most of the participating organizations sponsoring Exploring units were corporate and government entities that would (or could) not support the BSA membership restrictions, such as the religious principles (i.e., Duty to God) requirement. Therefore, there are no youth membership criteria except age, nor are there any adult membership criteria except the requirement to pass a background check and take Youth Protection Training. As a reminder, Exploring is a hands-on career education program for young men and women from 6th 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 be.

Today we have about 4,450 Exploring clubs and posts, with ~95,400 youth and ~19,800 adults nationwide, who are led by their elected youth leaders with their adult advisors providing the training and guidance for these elected officers. As I stated earlier, the Exploring program has welcomed girls as exemplified by the fact that 46% of our youth members are females and 31% of our advisors are women. In fact, my experience has shown that many of these young ladies become the elected leaders of their respective clubs and posts. As an aside, our largest single Exploring career field is law enforcement, with 38% of the posts and 28% of the youth membership, and they have elected two girls as their national youth representative (Avery Neuhart from the Customs and Border Protection Post 202 based in the National Capital Region) and vice national youth representative (Gisselle Lugo is the deputy inspector at Post 1490 from the Nassau County Police Department in Long Island, N.Y.).

Here is another example of the success and support of young ladies within the Exploring program. In Dec. 2019, I was honored to participate on the 2019 Motorola Solutions Foundation Public Safety Explorer Scholarship Selection Committee. We had to select scholarship recipients from 11 applicants in law enforcement, fire/EMS, health, aviation and/or law and government Exploring, who would be studying in the field of public safety and were vying for five \$2,000 scholarships. The five scholarship recipients were three young ladies from law enforcement Exploring, one young man from fire/EMS Exploring and one young lady from aviation Exploring.

The one area that all of our Exploring advisors, whether men or women, need support is in unit service. Many of our councils and districts are not providing consistent unit service to most of our Exploring clubs and posts. Sadly, the only time they see anyone from the council and district is when they renew their annual unit membership. So my plea to our council and district commissioners is to please provide consistent and frequent unit service to the Exploring units in your councils, as much as your unit commissioner resources allow.



Where Do We “Meet the People”?

This issue of *The Commissioner* is devoted to “Meeting the People.” What is it that we mean with this newsletter theme? Several times in the last year, you have seen us write about developing relationships and remind you that we need to continue to cultivate them. Well, now, that necessitates that you “Meet the People” wherever that might be. Meeting unit leaders or district and council leaders (both volunteers and professionals) usually means seeing them in person. With the COVID-19 situation, that all has changed. So our methods have now expanded and in some cases have become more challenging. I started to think about all those methods and came up with a list. See if you can add to it:

- Email
- Text
- Phone
- FaceTime, video conference (Zoom, Webex, GoToMeeting)
- BSA webpages www.scouting.org
- Scouting Wire <https://scoutingwire.org/>
- Scouting at Home <https://www.scouting.org/scoutingathome/>
- Program Support Resources <https://www.scouting.org/commissioners/program-support-resources/>
- U.S. mail

No matter which method you use, it is important to reach out to your units or leaders to see if they need assistance with anything. You will be surprised by how receptive they will be to your wanting to maintain some sense of normalcy in these unsettling times. We also suspect that maintaining these relationships will keep Scouting on everyone’s minds, making it stronger as we move through the pandemic. Think about all the new communication and technology skills we are learning. Just think how nice it will be to Meet the People in person when we move beyond the current situation.



Darlene Sprague
National Commissioner Service
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Connecting the New Scouts BSA Unit Leaders

It has now been one year and a few months since we welcomed young women into Scouts BSA in either standalone units or linked troop units. Many of these units are now led by brand-new women Scoutmasters and committee chairs. Are we as commissioners making sure these new leaders feel a part of the BSA family? Have they been welcomed with offers of support, resources, equipment and maybe just a friendly smile and conversation? If you are a council or district commissioner, have you taken stock to be sure they all are receiving the help they need? As a unit commissioner to one of these new units, have you done all you can to connect them with the right resources? Don't assume that linked troops are working together; make sure to visit them to see if they are sharing resources (people resources and equipment resources). Perhaps you can suggest they have an information exchange night, where each person comes with an important piece of information about their role in the troop committee. This can be done in a virtual setting or person to person after COVID-19 ends. If the unit is not a linked

unit, suggest doing the same with a high-functioning troop in your district.

Perhaps the most challenging thing for a new unit is to help Scouts plan a camping experience. Call upon your high-functioning units to help the new unit with tips and techniques. Helping connect the youth through their leaders might be helpful too.

I can recall when I was the new woman district commissioner in the late 1990s (not many back then) and I felt like many of the male Scoutmasters did not want me to be involved. I will tell you that it took lots of conversations and interactions at events, letting them know I had a servant's heart and really had the Scouts' interest in mind before they accepted me. We need to facilitate those interactions so many of the new women Scout leaders feel that acceptance. As commissioners, it is in our nature, so let's make it happen.



Questions and Answers

Question: As a commissioner, I am looking for virtual Scouting resources for my Scouting units. Where would I find them?

Answer: Have you noticed the new commissioner webpage *News for Commissioners* <https://www.scouting.org/commissioners/news-for-commissioners/>? Here we have highlighted some resources for Scouting activities as well as information about using technology for virtual meetings. There is even a chart [Video Conferencing Options](#) that compares the virtual meeting resources.

Question: How can I find out about any technology updates and information about the tools I need as a commissioner?

Answer: There is a group called the Commissioner Technology Focus Group (originally called the Commissioner Tools Focus Group) that was formed back in 2014 to write the specifications for Commissioner Tools and subsequently roll out Commissioner Tools and support it. It is a group of subject matter experts (volunteers) who work with the BSA IT group to advise them on technology that commissioners use. Periodically, they publish a newsletter that highlights the changes that have been made to BSA technology that commissioners should be using. Those newsletters are posted on the Commissioner Tools webpage <https://www.scouting.org/commissioners/tools/> under the title **Updates to Technology of Interest to Commissioners**. These newsletters are distributed to all commissioners via email. In case you missed it, here is the latest issue [Commissioner Technology Focus Group Status Report – April 2020](#).



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Updated May 2020

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