

Summer 2020

# THE COMMISSIONER

A PUBLICATION FOR COMMISSIONERS AND PROFESSIONALS

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



## Our Moment in Time

The year was 1935. The Boy Scouts of America was building its first-ever National Scout Jamboree site in Washington, D.C. It was, by all indications, going to be an epic event. But a “serious epidemic of infantile paralysis” — polio — had other plans. The Jamboree was postponed. On the occasion, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who had been scheduled to host an event on the White House lawn, took to the radio waves to send a message of resolve and courage to Scouts around the country. Much of the nation listened on their tabletop radio. His message recognized the resilient nature of Scouting:

*When you go out into life, you have come to understand that the individual in your community who always says, “I can’t” or “I won’t” or “I don’t,” the individual who, by inaction or by opposition, slows up honest, practical, far-seeing community effort, is the fellow who is holding back civilization. ... We need more Scouts. The more, the better.*

By now, you know the rest of the story. The polio epidemic was defeated. The first BSA National Jamboree was held in 1937, with a sea of tents in the shadow of the Washington Monument. President Roosevelt was back and greeted the Scouts, praising Scouting as a great source of training in the virtues of good citizenship. The first National Jamboree was a spectacular success, laying the foundation for many to follow, and it demonstrated to the nation the resilience and resolve of Scouting. Scouting was here to stay.

We are living our own moment in time 85 years later. Scouting is being challenged on multiple fronts. We once again have the opportunity to demonstrate to the nation our strength, resilience and resolve as we work together to continue the mission of Scouting.

In times such as these, it is easy to feel frustrated. The enormity of the challenge is daunting. I find strength in the knowledge that the mission of Scouting is to change lives for the better. We develop character and leadership attributes one Scout at a time. I find strength in the ingenuity and passion of our local volunteers, professionals and parents, who work every day in the midst of a pandemic to ensure the delivery of the promise of Scouting.

In this time, what is the clarion call for how we support Scouting? We will deliver the future of Scouting one small step at a time, all in the community where you live. Scouting happens in your local community. Our focus should be on completing the small steps that will support the effective delivery of Scouting in our councils and units. In that regard, we know that commissioners own retention. If we can focus on



Scott Sorrells  
National Commissioner

one thing right now, I urge you to reach out and check on your local Scout leaders and professionals, and build on your relationship of trust and confidence. We should virtually embrace them and offer support as we all work together to keep Scouts engaged.

Fall is a time to recruit new Scouts, and we no doubt have to think differently. On Sept. 12, take part in the BSA Family Fun Fest, our signature online Cub recruiting event for Scout and non-Scout families. Scouting Wire is a great source of new and innovative membership resources. Our Facebook Commissioner Service site is another great source. Collaborate with your local professionals and volunteers to figure out how to best deliver Scouting in your community.

Two years from now, which will be 85 years after the first BSA National Jamboree, I am confident that we will look around, reflect on this most unusual journey and be proud of how we responded in our moment in time.

A heartfelt note of thanks for our volunteers and professionals, local and national, all working as one team and one movement. As a Scouting family, we understand in our soul the magic of the Scouting movement and our ability to impact the future. Thank you for playing your part today, one small step at a time.

Thanks for all you do for Scouting,

Scott Sorrells  
National Commissioner



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®

Prepared. For Life.®

# Focus

Your National Commissioner Service Team recently completed its annual planning process. That began with listening to feedback received from commissioners and BSA staff to help assess the current strengths and needs of Unit Service.

During discussions, issues common to all aspects of Unit Service were identified, including:

- **Accountability:** Our primary focus must be our mission — ensuring that **every** member of the BSA has a great Scouting experience. Metrics can be useful tools, but we are ultimately accountable for ensuring units serve youth effectively.
- **Awareness:** We are Scouting in the midst of change; timely, effective communication with commissioners will enable them to be aware of the reasons for those changes and how they can help unit leaders adjust and adapt to them.
- **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion:** We have an obligation to serve all youth; there is strength in diversity. **Anyone** with a servant's heart who represents the values of the Scout Oath and Law — and reflects the communities our units serve — is a candidate for Unit Service. We must work continually to increase the diversity (from every perspective) of our corps.
- **Key 3:** The partnership of professional staff and volunteers representing operations (Program, Membership and Finance) and Unit Service is potentially one of our greatest assets. The diversity of knowledge, experience and perspective it can bring to serving youth is unique. Commissioners serving as Key 3 members must fully engage in creating and maintaining that partnership; all of us must do our best to support every Key 3.
- **Morale:** Change is challenging; continuing change is wearing. We're uniquely positioned to help unit leaders focus on the good things that continue every day in Scouting — and the positive impact they are having through their service.
- **One Team:** Regardless of our role or responsibility, we are all members of one movement and one team that is focused on one thing: serving youth.
- **Simple and Unified:** We must eliminate everything that makes the work we do more difficult or less efficient, and we must ensure that what we do is aligned with and supports what others are doing to serve youth through Scouting.
- **Universal Program Support:** We support **every** program that requests Unit Service.
- **Virtual Scouting:** We will return to in-person Scouting as soon as it is safe to do so; in the interim, virtual Scouting enables us to continue serving youth. We've also learned that virtual meeting tools offer new opportunities to do some of our work more efficiently and effectively. They will remain a part of Scouting's future.



Larry Chase  
National Commissioner Service Chair  
[lhc@chasehome.net](mailto:lhc@chasehome.net)

Every goal your service team has set for the coming year supports one or more of those issues.

Every one of those issues is important; none of them is more important than supporting Key 3s throughout the BSA and helping maintain high morale among unit leaders — and with one another. Throughout this issue, members of your service team will offer insights on both.

Thank you. You have maintained your focus and helped Scouting remain strong and continue to serve youth in challenging times. **All** Scouting is local: What you do — in your region, your area, your council, your district — makes a difference in the lives of the youth we all serve. You volunteered to have an impact; maintaining your focus will ensure your success.

On the up trail ...



# Welcome Chris Beaver

Elsewhere in this issue, you will find articles about the work being done to transform roundtable to enable increased participation by unit leaders while continuing to fulfill its four traditional functions:

- Providing information
- Capturing information
- Offering current program training
- Providing networking opportunities

More must be done — quickly — but the project team of BSA national service center staff and unit service volunteers, supported by representatives of our national Cub Scout and Scouts BSA program committees, has made significant progress over the last few months.

In recent surveys, a significant majority of commissioners agreed that our new approach to roundtable would effectively support its four traditional functions. And while over 50% of unit leaders indicated they had attended either none or less than half of the roundtables offered in their district in the six months prior to the onset of COVID-19, nearly 90% of them indicated they would likely attend a virtual roundtable.

In a poll taken during a recent webinar attended by nearly 800 commissioners, 80% of respondents indicated they were an advocate for the new approach.

Your National Commissioner Service Team has traditionally included a roundtable chair. That position has been open for some time, as volunteers and professionals have partnered to explore how roundtables can serve unit leaders effectively.

Chris Beaver, a member of that team, has accepted the role of roundtable chair. Like every other volunteer on the team, Chris has a passion for serving youth through Scouting, a vision of how roundtable can support that, and Scouting and personal skills and experience that contributed to the progress that has been made. Developing additional resources to support roundtable commissioners and revising the roundtable training we provide to them and other commissioners is important work remaining to be done. Chris serves as an assistant council commissioner for training in his home council, is a member of your service team's national faculty, and has been a subject matter expert working with its curriculum development group in its efforts to revise our training. Under his leadership, roundtable will become an increasingly effective tool to support our unit leaders, and he will be an important part of your service team's efforts to support our national program committees.

Please welcome Chris to our National Commissioner Service Team!





# More Unit Commissioners, More Key 3 Support

More unit commissioners represent the possibility of more unit contacts. Critical! But what other benefits can unit commissioners provide? How about Key 3 support?

The unit commissioner's primary role is to help units succeed. By supporting the unit Key 3, the commissioner directly helps the unit to be successful. However, unit commissioners can also provide critical support to the district or council Key 3.

A district camporee is a good example. A successful camporee involves planning the camporee, promoting the camporee and delivering the camporee. These steps require significant volunteer support. Unit commissioners are uniquely positioned to provide that support. For instance, unit commissioners can promote the camporee by ensuring the leadership of their units is aware of the camporee. Unit commissioners also understand that their duties include helping the unit access district and/or council resources, such as activities. A district camporee can be an important activity in the unit's yearly plan. By promoting the district camporee, the unit commissioner helps strengthen the unit's program and connects the unit to a district resource.

Unit commissioners can also help deliver the camporee. They can check in units, provide security, serve as drivers, deliver gear and supplies, staff activity stations or inspect campsites at checkout. By providing this volunteer support, they free unit volunteers to focus on their units.

Such district or council service increases goodwill for the unit commissioners. For instance, there is a successful council commissioner who encourages the commissioners in his council to support one council project each year. He commented that when other Scouters see commissioners adding value to a council project, such as a council camporee, the visibility and credibility of the commissioners increases. Doors otherwise



**Jeff Bostwick**  
*National Commissioner Service*  
*Recruiting and Retention Chair*  
[bostwick.jeffrey@gmail.com](mailto:bostwick.jeffrey@gmail.com)

closed begin to open, commissioners are more deeply invested in the council and district, and respect for the service of the commissioner increases.

Simply put, recruiting more unit commissioners and retaining existing unit commissioners not only facilitates more and better unit contacts, but it also increases support for Key 3s in the council and helps the unit commissioners better serve their units. The council benefits, the commissioners benefit, the unit benefits and, most important, the Scouts benefit.

## Morale Officer Role in Commissioner Service

Baden Powell stated: "A Scout smiles and whistles under all circumstances." In an uncertain world, fostering good morale is critical to individual and collective success. Commissioners are the spirit of the BSA. We are uniquely positioned to be Scouting's morale officers.

Spreading the good news of the BSA with "smile and whistle under all circumstances" may be our best commissioner recruiting and retention strategy.

First, everyone is attracted to positive people with a positive purpose. Leadership coach Steve Gutzler noted: "Positive attitudes really do create positive energy and attract positive people and positive results." The transformative benefits the BSA offers youth is a positive purpose that we can rightfully proclaim at every opportunity. Our value statements, the Scout Oath and the Scout Law exemplify these positive purposes. They contain words of character: trustworthy, helpful, friendly, courteous, duty and moral integrity. They embody values we instill in young people. They are our statement of positive purposes for our nation's youth. People are rightfully attracted to this mission. Once we share that good news, recruiting quality people to our purposes is natural and easy.

Second, positive people prevail in tough times. Thomas Edison famously quipped: "I haven't failed. I just found 10,000 ways that won't work." In these tough BSA times, commissioners are critical to our success. When others are casual, commissioners wear uniforms. When others look for ways to complain, commissioners look for ways to serve. When others look for ways to tear down, commissioners look for ways to build up. As we continue to serve our units proudly and positively, we are the spirit leaders of the BSA. Staying laser focused on youth service will attract positive people to our team and retain great commissioners.

Finally, this year's team motto is "Meet the People." It powerfully reminds us to make heartfelt connections with those we serve. As we meet with unit leaders, a kind word, a socially distanced "handshake," a smile and a song will be worth more than any complex strategy for improvement. These heartfelt connections offered by a humble Scouter with a servant's heart will build morale that drives success.

Members of the commissioner corps are BSA's best morale officers. Positive morale is the best commissioner recruiting and retention strategy ever devised.



# Effective Communication Helps Every Key 3 Plan and Organize

Effective communication helps every Key 3 plan and organize, regardless of their level in Scouting. As commissioners, we need to be especially aware of the need for unit, district and council Key 3s, because the closer you are to the Scout, the more important the information becomes.

The Marketing and Communication Team shares information from throughout Scouting. Our topics are wide-ranging but often include advancement, membership and training. We expect commissioners to share this information with their Key 3s. The communication channels we use to share information include Facebook, LinkedIn, the Commissioner Forum and News for Commissioners. We also ask commissioners to ensure that the Key 3s communicate with their committees, boards and units so these organizations can develop and implement their plans.

Communication serves as a foundation for planning. All the essential information must be communicated to the Key 3, who in turn must communicate the plans to implement them. Communication is also used in organizing, which involves the implementation of a plan and review of the milestones to be sure the plan is successful.

Effective communication is a building block of successful organizations. I learned in college that communication acts as organizational blood. All my Scouting experience has validated that point. If units are not receiving information from their district and council, they might not plan to attend an event, might not catch the change in advancement rules that permits extensions in new circumstances, or might not realize they need to retake Youth Protection Training. If Scout parents do not receive the information they need, problems will arise.

Communication is a source of information to the Key 3 members for the decision-making process, as it helps identify and assess alternative courses of action. An effective and efficient communication system requires proficiency in delivering and receiving messages. Part of effective communication requires the discovery of various barriers to communication, analysis of the reasons for their occurrence and the taking of preventive steps to avoid those barriers. Commissioners need to develop and maintain an effective communication system in any commissioner role. That communication system should be designed to support the Key 3. Maybe it is a newsletter. Maybe you create a closed Facebook group. Of course, sharing information at meetings has been a regular method, but be sure to have a way to communicate with anyone who is not able to attend your meeting.



**Mike Moegenburg**  
*National Commissioner Service  
Marketing and Communications Chair*  
[mikemoegenburg@yahoo.com](mailto:mikemoegenburg@yahoo.com)

Communication is more important now than ever before. We are accustomed to receiving relevant information in a timely manner. We regularly encounter roadblocks to communications being received. Sometimes we experience information overload. Other times we struggle to receive information because of time pressures and commitments to family and career. So we need to be sure to be clear and concise as we share information.

Finally, communication plays a role in the morale of our teams. These are challenging times for Scout leaders, and I am not just talking about the pandemic. Scouters feel the constant drip, drip, drip of news that we need to absorb about a program we love and cherish. My reminder to all of you is that we need to nourish our soul and help others as they move forward on their journey. To help you help yourself and others, the Marketing and Communications Team will be looking for inspirational stories to share with all of you on social media.



# Supporting the Key 3 With Technology

You probably heard long ago that technology is supposed to make our lives easier, and for the most part it has, in my opinion. For example, consider how technology has simplified, expedited and reduced the cost of communicating. (Send an instant message by voice or text for practically no cost around the world. Remember how long it used to take to mail a letter and get a response from overseas, or how much a long-distance phone call used to cost?) The same with banking — we can scan checks for deposit and move thousands of dollars with the click of mouse (or tap of a finger) instantly.

More specifically to a Scouting Key 3 (unit, district, council, etc.), technology — especially computers — has also made our lives easier. For example, at every Key 3 level there are occasions when we need to “look up” some historical information or reference. I cannot even begin to count the number of times the computer search function has located a critical piece of information that I could not otherwise have located.

Technology also has given us the double-edged sword of data. Data can help us identify where we need to devote our attention and assets, such as a unit that has not had contact with a commissioner or professional in a “long time.” Conversely, if we focus too intently on data (or “bean counting,” as some call it), we might lose sight of our objective to provide needed unit service. This coming year, the Technology Team is going to work to help change the commissioner mindset from just counting contacts to showing how the contacts can result in improved unit service, which in turn can make the commissioner’s (and professional’s) life easier.

One of the “issues” with technology is that it is constantly changing, which understandably frustrates some users. The Technology Team can relate — some of the changes happen so fast that at times even we cannot keep up with all the changes. Change therefore creates both needs and opportunities where the Technology Team can help the Key 3 feel once again that the technology is making their lives easier. To assist commissioners across the board (not just the Key 3) in addressing the issue of constantly changing technology, one of the Technology Team goals for the coming year is to create mini technology training modules that will be available for delivery during the monthly commissioner meeting.



**Rick Hillenbrand**  
*National Commissioner Service  
Commissioner Technology Chair*  
[rick\\_hillenbrand@alum.mit.edu](mailto:rick_hillenbrand@alum.mit.edu)

The Technology Team has other goals for the coming year. Two in particular that should also increase the effectiveness of Key 3s and commissioners across the board are the development of a Unit Health dashboard and the implementation of access within Commissioner Tools to additional unit information, such as activity logs and the recently implemented unit advancement data. (To access unit advancement data from within the web version of Commissioner Tools, go to the contacts tab, display the units, select the unit desired, then the Advancement Report icon will appear in the gray bar next to the Charter download icon. Click the Advancement Report icon, choose the desired date range and run the report. If you **MUST** have this information on your mobile device, remember you can use the web version of Commissioner Tools on your mobile device, it is just not designed to work as efficiently as the mobile MyScouting app.)





# Technology Can Boost Your Morale

When I first thought about the question, “How does technology IMPROVE your morale?” I was at a loss. Recognizing that it is darn hard to live without technology, my thoughts initially were not morale boosters. Not to be the master of the obvious, but our BSA membership continues to decline despite our best efforts, plus the near-constant barrage of “news” that is not uplifting and, of course, the perfect timing of a “demand” from Microsoft that Windows must install a critical update NOW just as my internet service fails is enough to make a person want to go camping somewhere off the grid. (More on that idea later.)

But maybe if you think about things from a different technology perspective, the times are rather good. How many of us remember traveling when you could not get gas for your car if the gas station was closed? Today, with the swipe of a credit or debit card, in most states we can get gas for the vehicle at any hour without an attendant. Last month for the first time I had to use the Windows Restore function 😞. I had installed an update that somehow reverted my current version of Office to Office 2010. Fortunately, I had a recent Restore point\*, and when I used the System Restore, IT WORKED just as advertised. Whew. Remember the “Blue Screen of Death”? The “Restore System” technological wizardry made the visions of a week of rebuilding my computer vanish, certainly boosting my morale for the day.

Who remembers the so-called “good ol’ days” of UVTS and only being able to get information and data on your units from

your professional? Today, with a few clicks of a button, we can nearly instantly find all sorts of information via my.scouting. In fact, there is SO MUCH that technology has allowed us to do for ourselves “on demand” that it is almost overwhelming, and darn hard to be an expert. However, as a commissioner, with just a little bit of proficiency, we can become a hero to a unit leader — and THAT is a big morale booster. For example, with the uncertainty that COVID-19 brings with respect to unit recruiting, did you know that BSA has a whole series of future and recent-past recorded “How to” recruiting-based webinars for both unit and council leaders? (Find them in the **Marketing & Membership Hub** under Scouting Resources at [scouting.org/resources](https://scouting.org/resources), or directly at [scoutingwire.org/marketing-and-membership-hub](https://scoutingwire.org/marketing-and-membership-hub).) If you really want to build your morale and help your units at the same time, go to the new information (including “How to”) posted at [scouting.org/resources/online-registration](https://scouting.org/resources/online-registration), which shows unit and council leaders how to use both the my.scouting **Invitation** and **Application Managers**.

And finally: If you are finding technology is getting you down, perhaps it is time to step away from the computer and take a Scout hike in the mountains or visit a Scout unit at camp.

\*If you use Windows and don’t know how to create a Restore point, you need to learn how.

# Training Can Lead to Confidence and Help Keep Morale High

Every commissioner should invest the time to improve their game! This is true whether you are a brand-new commissioner or a seasoned veteran. This is true whether you are a frontline commissioner or an administrative commissioner.

Numerous opportunities abound both locally and nationally. See the article below on national-level training events, and make plans to participate in one or more of these opportunities. Attend a local college of commissioner science or a local commissioner conference. Attend your regular council and district commissioner meetings. If you have the experience, work with your local team to help deliver local training!

Training has a direct benefit for each commissioner, because you learn about your role and how to deliver results for your team. You are simply better equipped to do your job when you are trained. There are also several indirect benefits of training. You get to build relationships. You gain confidence in your ability to perform your duties. You can test your limits and improve your skills.

The sum of the direct and indirect benefits may lead to higher morale for you as an individual, which will better equip you to serve and improve the morale of others. It is too easy to see all the changes that are underway in the movement and across the world, and get discouraged. Take some time today to invest in improving your game! You might see an improvement in your outlook.



**John Cherry**  
National Commissioner Service  
Commissioner Development Chair  
[jcherry628@aol.com](mailto:jcherry628@aol.com)



# National-Level Training Events

[scouting.org/commissioners/training/national](https://scouting.org/commissioners/training/national)

## Weeklong Conferences

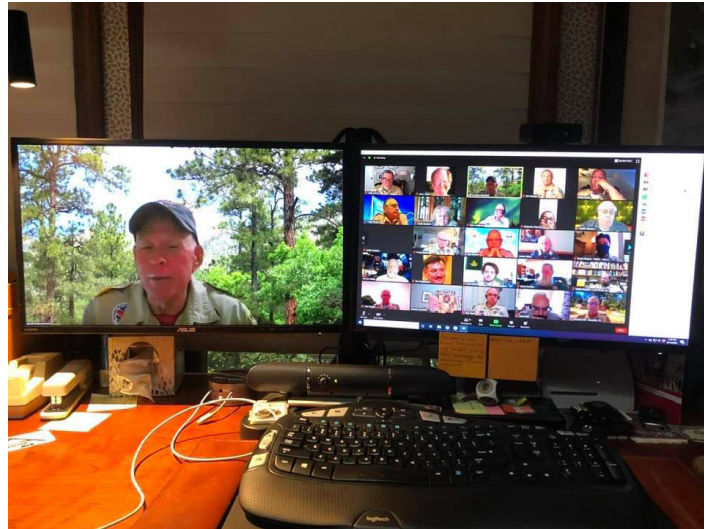
Plans are underway for the 2021 slate of weeklong commissioner conferences. We will be conducting one conference Jan. 10-16, 2021, at Florida Sea Base. Commissioner Week will be June 6-12, 2021, at Philmont Training Center, and will offer seven or eight conferences. Look for future correspondence, and check the link above for registration information when it becomes available.

## Impact Sessions

Weekend Impact Sessions are currently on hold due to COVID-19. They will resume as soon as it is safe to do so.

## Virtual Impact Sessions

The Development Team has implemented Virtual Impact Sessions, which are two-hour interactive training events. The first was conducted July 25 with 28 attendees. These sessions will occur monthly, and you can find additional information and registration information at the link above.



# Curriculum Review Update

We have previously written about the formation of the Curriculum Review Team. This group is working methodically through the Basic Training and College of Commissioner Science curriculum,

and making updates to the material. We will use this space in future issues of The Commissioner to document what material has been updated and how to get access to it.

# 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](mailto:Commissionerdevelopment@scouting.org)

Commissioners are welcome to submit feedback on the supported curriculum as they see fit, 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. If you require a response, please be sure to put your email address in the body of the email.



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®

Prepared. For Life.®



# Stay Tuned — Supporting the Key 3

The work of the National Commissioner Service Team is to support Scouting and help our volunteers, parents, youth and staff have a great Scouting experience. In Scouting, we have a Key 3 at every level: unit, district, council, area, region and national. These three individuals are two volunteers and one professional, except at the unit level, where they are all volunteers. At all levels, the Key 3 assesses strengths and needs, and makes recommendations to achieve goals. Starting, Sustaining and Growing Units has listened to the recommendations, and is working toward providing solutions to the needs of the Key 3s at all levels.

It is important throughout Scouting to start new units, and to sustain and grow existing ones. Having clear direction on how to accomplish these goals will make them easier to achieve. The revision of the Unit Performance Guide is nearing completion and will be easier to navigate as an online resource. This “best practice” information will allow users to retrieve needed information at the click of a mouse. When the webpage is posted, the details can be updated in a timely manner. This will allow for the timely adoption of changes as they become necessary. Other recommendations of areas to concentrate on are Family Scouting, Scouts BSA – Linked Troops and, finally, how to enhance the BeAScout Pin. Every Key 3 wants to add more units and maintain the health of the current ones.

Starting, Sustaining and Growing Units is providing the solutions needed for the Key 3s to grow and sustain our unit membership, both youth and adult. With the publication of this new resource, users at all levels of Scouting will have a fresh place to locate the updated information to move our mission forward. In our ever-changing world of Scouting, it is vital that we stay informed of all the updates. Please share The Commissioner and welcome others to visit the Commissioners webpage. Stay tuned and check back often for the latest and greatest resources to support our units.

[scouting.org/commissioners/starting-sustaining-and-growing-units](http://scouting.org/commissioners/starting-sustaining-and-growing-units)

What is the Key 3?

[blog.scoutingmagazine.org/2015/08/19/what-is-the-key-3](http://blog.scoutingmagazine.org/2015/08/19/what-is-the-key-3)



*Sue Simmons*  
*National Commissioner Service*  
*Starting and Sustaining Units Chair*  
[susan.simmons1@comcast.net](mailto:susan.simmons1@comcast.net)



# Morale Officers — Starting, Sustaining and Growing Units

*"The most worthwhile thing is to try to put happiness into the lives of others." Robert Baden-Powell*

Commissioners are referred to as the chief "morale officers" of the region, area, council, district and units. So what does that mean? The definition of a morale officer is:

*Someone who does their **job** well, achieves balance in their life, and helps inspire and grow the enthusiasm of fellow employees/**volunteers**, all while genuinely loving their work or organization.*

*That definition sure sounds like a commissioner with a servant heart and a love for Scouting.*

As commissioners, we must always be prepared to answer questions about the Boy Scouts of America from parents, youth, unit leaders or a person from the community. It is our responsibility to answer with accurate information. It is also important to remember that if you don't have the answer, just say, "I'm not sure, but I will find out and get back to you," and then make sure you find the answer and contact the person.

Our movement is facing a challenging time, but we the commissioners are here to help, support, answer questions, be a friend and be the resource our units need. Whether you are a commissioner starting a new unit, helping a unit grow or supporting a unit to sustain their Journey to Excellence Gold achievement, it is important to lift up the units and help them meet their goals during this perplexing time.

The best way to help our units is to be well-versed in the latest information. The information that comes from BSA's national service center and your council is the most reliable in answering current challenging questions that come from your units (e.g., restructuring, registration fees and COVID-19). You should visit the Commissioners webpage regularly to find the newest information to assist with unit service.

As morale officers, we should all be able to enthusiastically answer this question: "**Why join Scouting?**" I would think we all have a personal story that conveys what a wonderful youth leadership program Scouting is and how the cost is so worth it. I have included three examples of answers I found online, which are a good start. Remember to make your response personal and genuine — and deliver it with enthusiasm.

## Why Join Scouting?

1. "**Scouting's** programs and outdoor adventures give young people the opportunity and freedom to explore a world beyond the boundaries of everyday life. It presents them with chances to try new things, provide service to others, build self-confidence and develop leadership skills."
2. "**Scouting** helps youth develop academic skills, self-confidence, ethics, leadership skills and citizenship skills that influence their adult lives."
3. "**Scouting** provides consistent opportunities for **Scouts** to learn and practice leadership skills. Leading projects and peers is the norm for kids in the program. As **Scouts** mature in rank, their leadership abilities continue to grow, and they're offered even more opportunities to lead."

**SMILE.** ... It could make someone's day.

- Why Scouting? [scouting.org/about/why-scouting](https://scouting.org/about/why-scouting)
- 7 reasons why parents should consider Scouting: [scoutingwire.org/7-reasons-why-parents-should-consider-scouting](https://scoutingwire.org/7-reasons-why-parents-should-consider-scouting)
- Benefits of Cub Scouting: [scouting.org/cubhub/research-backed-benefits-cub-scout](https://scouting.org/cubhub/research-backed-benefits-cub-scout)
- Bankruptcy information: [bsarestructuring.org](https://bsarestructuring.org)



# Key 3 Leadership and Positive Unit Health



These are challenging times for Scouting, with COVID-19 forcing everyone to stay at home and turn to virtual meetings for practically every single activity, including campouts in the backyard or living room. Unit Key 3 had to pivot rapidly to keep programs going with alternative activities to meet requirements toward advancement. Changing outdoor hiking or camping activities has been especially tough.



**Steve Lee**  
National Commissioner Service  
Program Chair  
[stevel0923@gmail.com](mailto:stevel0923@gmail.com)

[Excerpt from Bryan on Scouting - "What is the Key 3?"](#)

LEVEL	KEY 3 POSITIONS		
<b>UNIT</b> (Pack, Troop, Crew & Ship)**	<b>Unit Leader</b>	<b>Committee Chair</b>	<b>Chartered Org. Rep. (COR)</b>
<b>DISTRICT</b>	District Chair	District Commissioner	District Executive*
<b>COUNCIL</b>	Council President	Council Commissioner	Scout Executive*
<b>AREA</b>	Area President	Area Commissioner	Area Executive*
<b>REGIONAL</b>	Regional Chair	Regional Commissioner	Regional Executive*
<b>NATIONAL</b> <i>Current Leaders</i>	National Chair <i>Dan Ownby</i>	National Commissioner <i>Scott Sorrels</i>	President and CEO <i>Roger Mosby</i>

*\*This person is a professional and not a volunteer.*

*\*\*Unit commissioners are not members of the unit, but serve as advisors.*

Deciding not to go dark as a unit requires commitment by the Key 3 to carry on with new approaches. The Key 3 leadership is the backbone of Scouting committees up and down the chain of the organization, as illustrated in the table above. They meet regularly apart from the committee as a whole to determine the pathway forward on issues like budget, membership and leadership roles. As unit commissioners, we can help these leaders carry on with the following suggestions.

**Contact.** The pandemic has been going on for five or six months now, so maintaining regular contact has served as a lifeline for units transitioning over to virtual meetings. These are unprecedented times, so unit Key 3 leaders really need guidance from council or national on program adaptation. Having regular support is vital to unit service during normal times; during a pandemic, it is critical!





**Resources.** We are all in this together, so unit Key 3 leaders are asking similar questions about program execution and creative ways to accommodate change. Fortunately, there is a rich resource of information across multiple BSA websites, including one's own local council. In addition, unit leaders are sharing tips and experience about virtual meetings on social media or in webinars. And virtual roundtable meetings are helping unit leaders directly.

**Encouragement.** Last, these are tough times for all levels of BSA leadership, but it can be especially difficult for unit Key 3 as they are trying to keep Scouts engaged while answering questions from parents. They need answers, perspective and context from their unit commissioners to navigate these unusual circumstances. Actively involved Charter Organization Representatives can also be a source of encouragement for units struggling with financial or leadership shortages.

## Unit Service During Challenging Times

There is a lot going on in the world at this time, and there seems to be an ever-mounting set of challenges we are facing: from COVID-19 to camping (or lack thereof), Stay@Home to Work-From-Home, instability in the marketplace to instability in the streets. BSA has its own challenges on top of that with lawsuits, bankruptcy and membership fees. Given all these things plus our own struggles with the pandemic, how do we, the commissioner corps, continue to provide quality unit service to the youth?



**Scout Oath.** It all starts here, and we are reminded that our role as commissioners begins with duty to Scouting and its application to unit service. The dictionary defines an oath as *“a solemn promise, often invoking a divine witness, regarding one’s future action or behavior.”* In good times or bad, we are committed to quality programs and the youth we serve. That is our promise.

**Impact/Legacy.** Despite what’s going on, neither youth nor program has changed. Program application is undergoing changes with virtual meetings and stay-at-home activities. Sure, there are organizational changes, too, but as far as the program goes, Scouts are still working on achievements and rank advancement across the board. This is the impact/legacy we continue to strive toward with the Aims and Methods of Scouting, albeit in new ways previously unimagined.



**Outings.** As the saying goes, Scouting is outings! We are all missing summer camp, whether it’s resident Cub camp (some councils), troop camp in the mountains or backpacking at **Philmont**. The pandemic is real, and the health risks are too great to take any

chances. Let’s stay safe and plan for next year’s adventures, like family camping at [Philmont](#) or a high-adventure activity with our troop, crew or ship.

**Scout Law.** Every point of the Scout Law, from being trustworthy to being reverent, is applicable to these difficult times. As we are here to lead by example, let’s remember to reach out to all our unit leaders or their committees by being a source of encouragement through our can-do attitude and resourcefulness. Every unit needs a wellness check by their commissioner.



Lastly, as this article was being written, my own council announced a 50% staff reduction due to financial burdens created by COVID-19. I hear we are not alone, as other councils are going through similar changes. Going forward, we will have to be the glue and grease to fill the void left behind by staff. A greater dependency will be placed on the volunteers to keep Scouting on track and moving forward. Effective unit service is essential now more than ever to the health of the units we serve.





# Latest Program Updates for the Commissioner Corps

To help our commissioners corps stay on top of current news, training and program changes, here are the summer 2020 updates within each of the BSA program communities. Some BSA programs have their own update websites, to which we will point you directly. Given the challenges of the current COVID-19 pandemic, the Commissioner Website under [Program Support Resources](#) continues to provide the latest resource links on conducting **Virtual Meetings**, **Virtual Merit Badge and Boards of Review** from home.

## Cub Scouts

### Hints to Help Units for the New Program Year

We are about to start a new program year for **Cub Scouts**. *This year will be different.* Schools are trying to figure out when, how and if the kids will be returning. Cub Scouting recruits the majority of our youth using access to local elementary schools. In addition, we need to focus on retaining the kids already in the program. Retention is key to this program year.

Below are two resources to help get your units off to a good start.

**Den Leader Experience.** Den leaders should use Scoutbook to manage den meetings! The Den Leader Experience enables a leader to run an entire den meeting from a smart device: initial planning, running the meeting with sample how-to videos and, after the meeting, logging advancement. Families that were unable to attend can be easily contacted to get them what they need to stay on track.

Scoutbook is also available for parents so they can see how their child is progressing. Parents should be encouraged to download the web app to a smart device or phone. Check out this [article](#) on Scouting Wire for more information.

[Cub Scout Virtual Roundtable Breakout for August 2020.](#) A common complaint with packs is that a few adults do all the work and “no one volunteers.” This 10-minute video shares an exercise that will set everyone on the **path to volunteering** in some capacity. Families come in all different shapes and sizes, and some have the capacity to volunteer more than others. Units offer many opportunities that do not require a registered leader. Each unit is unique in their needs. This video shows units how to define volunteer opportunities and how to get everyone doing something. The key is to allow families to pick their volunteer job.

This year will be challenging for a number of reasons. Let's focus on what we can control: setting up our Cub Scouting youth and their families for a fun and successful program year.

## Scouts BSA

The first half of this year has been nothing like we have experienced before. As we go into a new Scouting year that will be anything but normal, we want to make sure you are aware of several tools available for your Scouts BSA troop. First, if you are looking for the latest information about **temporary accommodations** for outdoor activities and advancement due

to COVID-19, make sure to visit [scouting.org/coronavirus/covid-19-faq](https://scouting.org/coronavirus/covid-19-faq). This webpage is constantly updated with the latest information, including guidance about Eagle Scout extensions.

The National Scouts BSA Committee has been hosting several **Office Hours** over the last few months with valuable information. They include answers to program changes and best practices from troops nationwide. Past and future recordings of these webcasts can be found at [scouting.org/programs/scouts-bsa/program-updates](https://scouting.org/programs/scouts-bsa/program-updates). On June 28, 2020, the National Commissioner Service Team hosted a webinar on the topic “Linked Troops: What – Why – How.” If you did not have the opportunity to participate, we recommend you watch it and share it with your Scout BSA troops. The recording can be found at [vimeo.com/435803473](https://vimeo.com/435803473).

For our units, **recruiting** over the next few months is going to look different from what we have seen in the past. We are going to rely more than ever on virtual tools and tap into each other's personal networks. The National Membership Team is hosting several virtual workshops to get adjusted to this new reality. You can find them at [scoutingwire.org/marketing-and-membership-hub](https://scoutingwire.org/marketing-and-membership-hub). The webinars include how to set up your BeAScout.org unit pin, peer-to-peer recruiting and the many social media tools useful for our units.

## Venturing

The **Venturing program** is based on a unique and dynamic relationship among youth, adult leaders and mentors, and community organizations. Local organizations establish Venturing crews by matching their people and program resources to the interests of young adults in the community. The result is a program of exciting and meaningful activities that help youth pursue their special interests, grow, develop leadership skills and become active citizens. Venturing crews can focus on a variety of career or hobby-related interests.

As commissioners, we all understand the importance of a relationship with charter partners and the **Key 3** in serving units. Venturing is no different, although their Unit Key 3 will include a Crew Advisor in place of a Cubmaster, Scoutmaster or Skipper. It's also no mystery that all units served by a council or district need a connection to resourceful, knowledgeable and engaged commissioners who can help them build a stronger program for their youth.

Here's a challenge: Create an awareness of all the crews that exist within your district or council boundaries. Familiarize yourself with the leadership in those units and make a connection. AND be aware that there are resources available to you via the [scouting.org](https://scouting.org) website, if you feel you need to brush up on what is happening in Venturing. Grab a fellow commissioner and build a team of experts — good things will come of it! Or go online to the BSA Learn Center and take Venturing-specific training. You do not need to be registered in a specific position to take this training. All modules are available to you online.



Check out the below link — it provides a great overview, as well as details on terminology, training and program planning, and an introduction to the **National Venturing Committee**: [scouting.org/programs/venturing/about-venturing/learn-more](https://scouting.org/programs/venturing/about-venturing/learn-more)

In addition, one of the unique and impactful differences in the Venturing program is the **Venturing Officers Association**. VOAs consist of a team of youth officers who are supported by Advisors. Through this structure, youth organize program events, lead training and provide forums to bring the crews, districts, councils and areas together. A youth-inspired and youth-led program ensures the youth perspective in the Venturing program and prepares these young people for their respective futures. It also gives them a voice in strengthening the Venturing program.

The recent slate of **National/Regional VOA Officers** began their terms June 1. As these officers prepare their transition into these roles each year, they routinely identify and communicate their vision and goals for their tenure. Here are just a few examples of what they have identified as focus items to support the Venturing program:

- Establish standard resources for VOA orientations
- A VOA promotion guide
- Crews for Cubs — utilizing Venturing youth as den chiefs for packs
- Greater utilization of social media platforms
- New resources for Area VOAs
- “I Chose Venturing” video campaign
- Establishing Area VOA–Area Committee relations
- Updated and revamped website
- Revitalizing communications
- Increased support of councils
- Increased visibility in councils

This group is engaged and visionary, and prepared to lead. We will follow its work in future newsletter updates. Want to meet the **2020-2021 National VOA Officers and Advisors**? Visit [scouting.org/programs/venturing/voa/meet-your-officers](https://scouting.org/programs/venturing/voa/meet-your-officers)

And, finally, check out the **Summer 2020 Venturing Newsletter**. You can download or read from this site: [issuu.com/venturingbsa/docs/venturing\\_newsletter\\_spring\\_2020](https://issuu.com/venturingbsa/docs/venturing_newsletter_spring_2020)

## Sea Scouts

As summer heads into fall and we prepare for the start of another school year, **Sea Scouting** continues to sail. All summer and all year, good news stories of new ships, new Sea Scouts, new youth leadership and new **Quartermasters** have been posted on social media — a testament to the enduring draw of the aquatics program in Scouting.

One of the best parts about Sea Scouts is that it is Scout-led; this is something we want to show on the national level. Sea Scouts is introducing the **National Youth Quarterdeck**, a national-level group of experienced Sea Scout youth to help guide the Sea Scouts across the nation.

The **Quarterdeck** is divided into five different committees: **Program Support, Communications, Membership/Growth, Outreach/Relationships and Operations**. Program Support will go into things such as spreading best practices, improving existing youth training and helping develop model ship meeting programs. Communications will focus on promoting Sea Scouts on social media, drafting press releases, helping with updating and maintaining information on the Sea Scout website, and experimenting with different techniques. Membership/Growth will analyze membership data, develop recruiting strategies and assist in new ship creation. Outreach/Relations will work with the National Sea Scout Support Committee liaisons, help brainstorm possible relationships for Sea Scouts and emphasize the importance of Sea Scouts to colleges. Operations will oversee internal operations and scheduling, keeping all the committees on track for success.

The Quarterdeck will be working in harmony with the **National Sea Scout Support Committee (NSSSC)**, and each Quarterdeck Committee will be working with an NSSSC sub-committee. This will help bring together perspectives of both the youth and adults in Sea Scouts.

**Talk with your ships** — draw out those interested in area, regional and national-level leadership and, along with their Skippers and committee, support them as they work toward candidacy into those positions.

**Regional and Area Commodores** have been looking at their recruiting goals versus actuals, and are working with local flotillas to start new ships across the BSA. Promote Sea Scouting as an option for older youth when attending in-person or virtual roundtables. In some cases, just knowing that Sea Scouting is an option for our older youth will spark an interest in aquatics and draw youth toward the program.

Finally, now is the time to review your **Ship's Unit Service Plans** and **Journey to Excellence** goals with the Ship Key 3, and work with them to adjust course where needed to ensure success. This is also the right time to be looking ahead and ensuring that your ships' recruiting campaigns are on track and your ships are able to recharter for 2021.

## National Disability Awareness

1. The most recent brochure for working with Scouts with special needs and disabilities is available from the BSA website: [filestore.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/510-071.pdf](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: [scouting.org/programs/scouts-bsa/disabilities-awareness](https://scouting.org/programs/scouts-bsa/disabilities-awareness)





# Exploring Support to Scouting's Key 3

Although Exploring (which, in 1998, after it became solely focused on career opportunities, was moved under Learning for Life) is technically a BSA affiliate program, it has supported and will continue to support the national, regional, area, council and district Key 3s.

First, Exploring has been one of our most stable programs nationally in terms of membership, and it is a significant source for membership growth not only for Exploring, but also for our traditional Scouting programs (i.e., Cub Scouting, Scouts BSA, Venturing and Sea Scouts). Because of its career focus, our councils and districts have used it to gain access and build positive and cooperative relationships with local school districts and other community groups, which, in turn, affords our councils and districts the opportunity to grow other Scouting programs' membership. Second, the Exploring program provides new sources of adult volunteers — from business and civic leaders with no prior Scouting experience — for our national, regional, area, council and district executive boards and committees. Third, these new adult volunteers often open new and significant sources of foundation and corporate funding for both the BSA national and council properties and endeavors from those new adult volunteers' agencies, corporations and organizations. Finally, because of its career focus, Exploring has the ability to build and enhance community awareness and cooperation with both adults and youth at the local level through its career-based clubs and posts. This community awareness and cooperation has the added benefit of growing membership not just for Exploring but for all our traditional BSA programs.

As the Exploring Chair for the National Commissioner Service Team, I have been and will continue to be a strong advocate for integrating our Exploring commissioners, referred to as "Exploring service team members," into our Commissioner Corps structure at all levels: national, regional, area, council and district. Why? Because their unit service role and responsibilities for their units (clubs and posts) are identical to our traditional Scouting programs' unit commissioners' roles and responsibilities for their units (packs, troops, crews and ships). As you probably know, they also use the same commissioner tools that our traditional BSA commissioners use. For those reasons, I will continue to advocate that these Exploring service team members be integral members of our council and district commissioner staffs, and not viewed as non-affiliated volunteers separate or distinct from the traditional BSA commissioner world.



**Craig Martin**  
*National Commissioner Service  
Exploring Chair*  
[bruin1967@aol.com](mailto:bruin1967@aol.com)

Further, our traditional BSA commissioners, with whom we all work, have their own personal careers and skill sets that are directly related to many of our career-based Exploring clubs and posts. And these skill sets can easily be translated into servicing Exploring clubs and posts with a minimum of preparation.

If you or any adult volunteers are interested in learning more about how to service Exploring clubs and posts, there is a BSA Learn Center supplemental module for commissioners working with Exploring units entitled "Servicing Exploring Units." (To find it, use the Course Catalog search and type "SCO\_756"). Also, on our Commissioners webpage ([scouting.org/commissioners](https://www.scouting.org/commissioners)), there is a link entitled "Exploring for Commissioners" that takes you directly to all the Exploring resources any commissioner would need to service an Exploring unit.



# Transforming Roundtable

Providing leaders with timely information on an ongoing basis is one of the best ways we can support them — particularly in this time of change. Roundtable has long been a primary vehicle for providing information to volunteers. Unfortunately, roundtable attendance has declined steadily for a number of years, making it a difficult solution for timely communication. Numerous efforts and campaigns over the last several years haven't altered that trend.

All Scouting is local. For several months, district roundtable commissioners have continued to deliver roundtables virtually. They did what great Scouting volunteers always do: They adapted and adjusted to current circumstances to continue serving youth. They did their best with the tools they had available — and it worked: Roundtable continued, and reports of improved attendance came from districts throughout the country.

At about the same time that COVID-19 made virtual Scouting (and roundtables) necessary, a team of BSA national staff members and local volunteers began the next phase of work to develop a new approach to roundtable to respond to the long-standing decline in attendance. The local experience with virtual roundtables confirmed one of the key concepts under development by the project team: virtual roundtables. (A nearby article provides an overview of the volunteer project team.)

## This is the inaugural month for that new approach to roundtable!

### What's different?

- A new, flexible roundtable agenda, including
  - Opening
  - Hot Topics
  - Safety Moment
  - Program Breakouts
  - Closing
- New content, often in downloadable video format, to support all agenda elements
- A completely revised Roundtable Resources website: [scouting.org/commissioners/roundtable-support](https://scouting.org/commissioners/roundtable-support)

### Why change?

- To increase roundtable's impact in a way that is simple, sustainable and flexible
- To respond to repeated volunteer requests to respect the conflicting demands on their time and provide more efficient alternatives to traditional meetings
- To leverage increased availability of high-speed internet access and virtual meeting tools



*Chris Beaver*  
*National Commissioner Service*  
*Roundtable Support Chair*  
[cbbeaver@gmail.com](mailto:cbbeaver@gmail.com)

## Much has been done; much more remains to be done.

- Increased content will be added as quickly as possible. This will better support local planning and promotion of roundtable and enable local districts to select from available materials that best meet local needs.
- Increased support, planning and training resources will be developed for roundtable commissioners.

Recent surveys of commissioners and unit leaders confirm significant support of increased flexibility in the delivery of roundtables, including virtual meetings. Local councils and districts are empowered to use the new resources to best meet their needs to provide information, collect information, deliver current program training and provide networking opportunities.



# Meet the People: Roundtable Project Team

Effective roundtables have impact in four ways:

- They provide information.
- They capture information.
- They offer current program training.
- They provide networking opportunities.

Developing new approaches to transform a resource that has been part of Scouting for literally decades isn't easy. The project team assigned that responsibility includes both professional staff and volunteers with a variety of knowledge, skills and experience in BSA programs, communications, video production, unit service and technology.

**The volunteer project team includes commissioners from throughout the U.S.:**

---

• <b>Chris Beaver</b>	<b>Glacier's Edge Council</b>	<b>WI</b>	<b>Central Region</b>
• <b>Bill Cameron</b>	<b>Washington Crossing Council</b>	<b>PA</b>	<b>Northeast Region</b>
• <b>Larry Chase</b>	<b>Atlanta Area Council</b>	<b>GA</b>	<b>Southern Region</b>
• <b>Christie Hust</b>	<b>South Plains Council</b>	<b>TX</b>	<b>Southern Region</b>
• <b>Catherine Kaser</b>	<b>Del-Mar-Va Council</b>	<b>MD</b>	<b>Northeast Region</b>
• <b>Tina Kerr</b>	<b>Atlanta Area Council</b>	<b>GA</b>	<b>Southern Region</b>
• <b>Mati Mayfield</b>	<b>Crossroads of the West Council</b>	<b>UT</b>	<b>Western Region</b>
• <b>Mike Moegenburg</b>	<b>Bay Lakes Council</b>	<b>WI</b>	<b>Central Region</b>
• <b>Darlene Sprague</b>	<b>Greater Niagara Frontier Council</b>	<b>NY</b>	<b>Northeast Region</b>
• <b>Mike Weber</b>	<b>Michigan Crossroads Council</b>	<b>MI</b>	<b>Central Region</b>

In addition to providing input and feedback to national staff who have been surveying commissioners and unit leaders to better understand their vision for roundtable and developing content to be used during the coming year, the volunteer project team completely revised the Roundtable Resources website ([scouting.org/commissioners/roundtable-support](https://scouting.org/commissioners/roundtable-support)) and developed a variety of new resources available there. The team also developed and delivered virtual meetings and webinars for regional and area commissioners and all unit, administrative and roundtable commissioners throughout the country. Their work continues. Additional resources are needed and are under development; feedback from throughout the corps provides inspiration on how best to deliver roundtables that meet the needs and expectations of today's unit leaders.





# Fostering Scouting Health Through the Commissioner Role in the Key 3

Inspiring and envisioning, encouraging, representing and serving as liaison, upholding standards — the commissioner's Key 3 role is crucial to the health of the council, district and units. How recently has your local team explored the role of the commissioner in the council Key 3?

As “the inspirational leader” in the council Key 3, the commissioner has the unique opportunity to be a guiding light, steering council decision-making toward the Scouting mission and helping the Key 3 team conceptualize how the council can live up to its values and strengthen local Scouting.

The council commissioner is the “chief morale officer,” setting the tone of encouragement that is so badly needed right now. As pointed out in a variety of ways in this newsletter, boosting morale is key to what commissioners do in every facet of Scouting and particularly in communicating directly with unit volunteers.

Serving as the “representative of the youth and uniformed volunteers” in the Key 3, commissioners are charged with helping the team maintain focus on program delivery and understand the perspectives of unit volunteers. Representing youth and volunteers well can have significant impact on both policy development and council communication within the Scouting community and the world beyond.

Functioning as “a liaison between professional staff and volunteers at the unit, district and council levels,” the commissioner helps build supportive relationships. In these uncertain times, strong support needs to extend in both directions, as staff members help units face unforeseen challenges and volunteers step up to assist professionals in coping with resource gaps.

An essential part of the commissioner's Key 3 role is “upholding the standards” of the Boy Scouts of America by guiding value-based decision-making within the council and within units, and by working to improve the quality of local Scouting program delivery.

Full commissioner participation in the Key 3 partnership can make a world of difference for the council and the units it serves. By engaging purposefully in creating and maintaining that partnership, the commissioner can ensure Scouting continues to have an extraordinary impact on our youth and our communities.

One of the goals of the four regional commissioners this year is to “help commissioners define their Key 3 leadership roles and establish effectiveness in these roles.” We'll be seeking your insights and ideas as we move forward.



*Linda Baker*  
*Northeast Regional Commissioner*  
[lalbaker@aol.com](mailto:lalbaker@aol.com)



# Boosting Morale Is What Commissioners Do Best!

What's been boosting your personal morale lately?

- Seeing Scouts accomplish something wonderful: creative or kind or challenging — or all three?
- Sharing the satisfaction of unit leaders who have navigated through all the “new normal” guidelines and safely delivered amazing Scouting program?
- Realizing that you are part of a vast team helping Scouting deliver traditional program and values in new and creative ways?
- Knowing that reaching out to a Scouting friend has made a positive difference for that friend?

Yes, we live in troubled times, but what gives us a morale boost today really isn't much different from what boosted our morale a year ago. What is different is the intensity of the need for a morale boost right now.

Morale grows with feelings of purposefulness, of belonging to a value-based team, of doing the right thing, of working toward a common goal, of having the power to make some difference, of realizing that others care about us. Morale is diminished when we feel that we have no control, that no one cares, or that our efforts are unrecognized or useless.

Today, as in the past, the morale challenge for commissioners is threefold.

1. It starts with accepting personal responsibility for boosting morale as something that we can and should do.
2. It continues with recognizing the opportunities all around us.
3. It resonates as we make a conscious effort to be prepared, i.e., to anticipate what we can say or do to have the desired effect.

Boosting morale has always been one of our main responsibilities at all levels of commissioning. Collectively and individually, we are charged with encouraging our fellow Scouters, noting and celebrating their successes, and building the kind of relationships that show we care and value them.

The opportunities are there. Spotting the needs and auspicious moments is a matter of noticing — of watching, listening and “being there” for others. You never know when you might be in the right place at the right time to make a positive difference in someone's morale.

We can prepare ourselves for delivering morale boosts partly by looking at situations from the perspective of our fellow Scouters, thinking about what we can learn from them and realizing what we can celebrate with them. As we consider the effect of our words and actions, it helps to keep Maya Angelou's insight in mind:



# Resources for the Key 3

As commissioners, we have traditionally been a major source of information for Key 3 leaders that need help at a unit, district, council, area or regional level. So where is the best place to get the most current information about BSA programs and suggested resources? The answer is the BSA website: [scouting.org](https://scouting.org). Yes, there are other sources of information on the internet, but much of it is outdated and does not reflect the current BSA. If the BSA website seems intimidating, the National Commissioner Service Team has worked very hard over the past year or so to make it easy for commissioners to find information in one place to share with their units or Scouting colleagues. The commissioner website is at [scouting.org/commissioners](https://scouting.org/commissioners). For easy reference, we have tried to create links to the most popular BSA sites. If you have not been to the commissioner website recently, you might want to spend a few minutes there and look around. For instance, if you are looking for Scouting program information, try the Program Resources (use link [scouting.org/commissioners/program-support-resources](https://scouting.org/commissioners/program-support-resources)) page. Or if you are looking for information about membership and marketing for Scouting units, try the Starting, Sustaining and Growing Units (use link [scouting.org/commissioners/starting-sustaining-and-growing-units](https://scouting.org/commissioners/starting-sustaining-and-growing-units)) page. Exploring information can be found at Exploring for Commissioners (use link [scouting.org/commissioners/exploring-for-commissioners](https://scouting.org/commissioners/exploring-for-commissioners)). And, of course, there's Journey to Excellence (use link [scouting.org/awards/journey-to-excellence](https://scouting.org/awards/journey-to-excellence)).

The Commissioners website also has useful information for just commissioners, like Commissioner Training (use link [scouting.org/commissioners/training](https://scouting.org/commissioners/training)), National-Level Commissioner Training (use link [scouting.org/commissioners/training/national](https://scouting.org/commissioners/training/national)), Technology for Commissioners (use link [scouting.org/commissioners/tools](https://scouting.org/commissioners/tools)), and Commissioner Manuals and



**Darlene Sprague**  
*National Commissioner Service  
Resources Chair*  
[darsprague@roadrunner.com](mailto:darsprague@roadrunner.com)

Resources (use link [scouting.org/commissioners/manuals](https://scouting.org/commissioners/manuals)), to name a few.

Current and correct information is key when helping unit leaders or leaders at all levels, so we are all providing the same program across the country.

Be a commissioner in the know.

## An Encouraging Word

If you look at any of the job descriptions for commissioners, you will see that part of the job is to be a morale officer at all levels of commissioner service. But just what does that mean in a practical sense? In my experience — and I have been a unit commissioner, district commissioner, council commissioner and area commissioner — it has all been remarkably similar; you are the cheerleader or coach cheering on those you serve.

We are in an incredibly challenging time not only for our nation, but for the BSA. We as commissioners need to be reaching out to the groups we serve to be sure they have what they need to do their jobs, which ultimately is to give youth the best possible Scouting experience. We need to be positive and

uplifting. If they are struggling with a problem, we can help them break it down and work through it. If they are searching for information, we can help them find it on the BSA website (see accompanying article *Resources for the Key 3*). If they are frustrated or feeling overwhelmed, we can simply listen and help them find a path forward.

But the most important aspect of being a morale officer is just being a friendly face or voice. Encouraging them in a positive way, praising them for what they are doing, or helping them see the road ahead and the benefits of the Scouting program for our youth!

You can do this! After all, you have a servant's heart!





# Questions and Answers

**Question:** Where can I find the recording of the Linked Troop Webinar that took place June 2, 2020?

**Answer:** It is available on the News for Commissioners webpage: [scouting.org/commissioners/news-for-commissioners](https://scouting.org/commissioners/news-for-commissioners). Check this site often (once a week) for the latest news that commissioners need.

**Question:** Are there any virtual Colleges of Commissioner Science being offered?

**Answer:** Yes there are several listed on the following Commissioner Webpage [scouting.org/commissioners/training/colleges/](https://scouting.org/commissioners/training/colleges/)



# National Commissioner Service Team

Chris Beaver	Roundtable Chair	<a href="mailto:cbbeaver@gmail.com">cbbeaver@gmail.com</a>	Madison, WI
Jeff Bostwick	Recruiting and Retention Chair	<a href="mailto:bostwick.jeffrey@gmail.com">bostwick.jeffrey@gmail.com</a>	San Diego, CA
Larry Chase	National Commissioner Service Chair	<a href="mailto:lhc@chasehome.net">lhc@chasehome.net</a>	Atlanta, GA
John Cherry	Commissioner Development Chair	<a href="mailto:jcherry628@aol.com">jcherry628@aol.com</a>	Atlanta, GA
Rick Hillenbrand	Commissioner Technology Chair	<a href="mailto:rick_hillenbrand@alum.mit.edu">rick_hillenbrand@alum.mit.edu</a>	Romney, WV
Steven Lee	Program Chair	<a href="mailto:stevel0923@gmail.com">stevel0923@gmail.com</a>	San Diego, CA
Craig Martin	Exploring Chair	<a href="mailto:Bruin1967@aol.com">Bruin1967@aol.com</a>	Colorado Springs, CO
Mike Moegenburg	Marketing and Communications Chair	<a href="mailto:mikemoegenburg@yahoo.com">mikemoegenburg@yahoo.com</a>	Sheboygan, WI
Susan Simmons	Starting and Sustaining Units Chair	<a href="mailto:susan.simmons1@comcast.net">susan.simmons1@comcast.net</a>	Chicago, IL
Darlene Sprague	Resources Chair	<a href="mailto:darsprague@roadrunner.com">darsprague@roadrunner.com</a>	Niagara Falls, NY



# Regional and Area Commissioners

Updated May 2020

Central Regional Commissioner Mike Weber <a href="mailto:mfw Weber112@comcast.net">mfw Weber112@comcast.net</a>	Southern Regional Commissioner Gail Plucker <a href="mailto:tenniseemom@comcast.net">tenniseemom@comcast.net</a>	Western Regional Commissioner Jim Libbin <a href="mailto:jlibbin@nmsu.edu">jlibbin@nmsu.edu</a>	Northeast Regional Commissioner Linda Baker <a href="mailto:lalbaker@aol.com">lalbaker@aol.com</a>
Area 1 Commissioner Greg Nygren <a href="mailto:nygren5154@gmail.com">nygren5154@gmail.com</a>	Area 1 Commissioner Diogo Tavares <a href="mailto:diogo.pt.tavares@gmail.com">diogo.pt.tavares@gmail.com</a>	Area 1 Commissioner Dave Murphy <a href="mailto:murphy@pcinv.com">murphy@pcinv.com</a>	Area 1 Commissioner Peter Glass <a href="mailto:pglass260@gmail.com">pglass260@gmail.com</a>
Area 2 Commissioner Ron Blaisdell <a href="mailto:ron@blaisdell.com">ron@blaisdell.com</a>	Area 2 Commissioner Joe Burnett <a href="mailto:joe.burnett@1stnb.com">joe.burnett@1stnb.com</a>	Area 2 Commissioner Richard P. Trentman <a href="mailto:commissioner@area2wr.com">commissioner@area2wr.com</a>	Area 2 Commissioner Sal Ciampo <a href="mailto:spciampo@aol.com">spciampo@aol.com</a>
Area 3 Commissioner Carm Walgamott <a href="mailto:walgamottc@aol.com">walgamottc@aol.com</a>	Area 3 Commissioner Forrest BjerKaas <a href="mailto:fbjerkaas@consolidated.net">fbjerkaas@consolidated.net</a>	Area 3 Commissioner Alan Wolfson <a href="mailto:alan.wolfson@gmail.com">alan.wolfson@gmail.com</a>	Area 3 Commissioner Darlene Kihlberg <a href="mailto:dmkihlberg@gmail.com">dmkihlberg@gmail.com</a>
Area 4 Commissioner Bruce C. Boyle <a href="mailto:bcb51@aol.com">bcb51@aol.com</a>	Area 4 Commissioner Jim Thielen <a href="mailto:scouts@lamb-thielen.com">scouts@lamb-thielen.com</a>	Area 4 Commissioner Rick TerBorch <a href="mailto:rterborch@earthlink.net">rterborch@earthlink.net</a>	Area 4 Commissioner Russ Devore <a href="mailto:rbdevore@yahoo.com">rbdevore@yahoo.com</a>
Area 5 Commissioner Scott Erikson <a href="mailto:eriksonS@aol.com">eriksonS@aol.com</a>	Area 5 Commissioner James Blake <a href="mailto:jblake@clemsun.edu">jblake@clemsun.edu</a>	Area 6 Commissioner Jim Tarleton <a href="mailto:jhtarleton@comcast.net">jhtarleton@comcast.net</a>	Area 5 Commissioner Chuck Bolger <a href="mailto:chuckbolger@aol.com">chuckbolger@aol.com</a>
Area 6 Commissioner Jon Kerr <a href="mailto:jon.kerr817@gmail.com">jon.kerr817@gmail.com</a>	Area 6 Commissioner Danny Von Horn <a href="mailto:danny.vonhorn@butlersnow.com">danny.vonhorn@butlersnow.com</a>		Area 6 Commissioner Dave Short <a href="mailto:drshortwb@gmail.com">drshortwb@gmail.com</a>
Area 7 Commissioner Jean Guzzetta <a href="mailto:jeanmg1@aol.com">jeanmg1@aol.com</a>	Area 7 Commissioner Mark Larson <a href="mailto:marklarson.hovc@gmail.com">marklarson.hovc@gmail.com</a>		
	Area 8 Commissioner Robert Christiansen <a href="mailto:bobc@rpccpa.com">bobc@rpccpa.com</a>		
	Area 9 Commissioner Jennifer Abbey <a href="mailto:jen.abbey1@gmail.com">jen.abbey1@gmail.com</a>		

