



## The Power of a Scout Smile

Baden-Powell often said, “A Scout smiles and whistles under all circumstances.”

I was struck by the essential truth of the power of a Scout smile, particularly in these challenging times. Think about how many times Scouting has brought a smile to your face. I recently enjoyed a Facebook video by a Cub Scout pack from Kennesaw, Georgia, sounding the alarm about a national popcorn shortage. The answer to all those smiling young Cub Scouts, of course, is to resupply your cupboards with Scout popcorn. Or enjoy Scout smiles on the world stage and enjoy any of the World Scout Jamboree videos on YouTube — my guess is that you will witness the unrivaled joy and friendship that Scouting offers our youth and adults. On a more personal level, think about your Scout interactions just this month. How many conversations have you had with Scouts whose friendships have immeasurably improved your life and brought a smile to your face? There truly is something to the power of a Scout smile.

Now, some 102 years after Baden-Powell’s comment, we are being challenged on multiple fronts. I find strength in the knowledge that the mission of Scouting is to change lives for the better. I find strength in the millions of smiling faces in our common experiences and knowing that our mission has positively impacted the lives of millions of Scouts and Scouters. We have the opportunity to demonstrate to the nation our strength, resilience, and resolve as we work together to continue the mission of Scouting.

What is the clarion call for how we support Scouting at this moment in time? Simply put, we need to support our local units and deliver program to America’s families every day. It is all about program, program, program. Local units need to be meeting on a regular basis, whether virtually, in person at a park, or using other solutions. We need to act with a sense of urgency. We need to act today. Reach out today 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.

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. The vast array of resources about different ways to deliver Scouting are listed in Larry Chase’s article in this issue of *The Commissioner*. They represent the best of our



Scott Sorrels  
National Commissioner

collective vision on the local and national levels. View them as your toolkit of ideas about how you can support local unit program success.

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 Sorrels  
National Commissioner



# It's About Membership ... And Everything Else

Throughout this issue, you're going to read about how commissioners support membership retention and growth. That might seem strange. After all, commissioners don't "do" Membership or Finance or Program. Or do they?

What *is* Unit Service?

It's

- Building relationships,
- Creating partnerships, and
- Supporting unit leaders to
- Ensure that **every** member of the BSA has a great Scouting experience.

**Commissioners should be a unit leader's single best resource.** Commissioners need not know the answer to every question, but they should know how to find answers. Commissioners should enable unit leaders to easily access the information needed to deliver a Scouting program that attracts and retains youth — and adults.

As a result, our focus shifts with the needs of our unit leaders. At this time of the year, recruiting and retaining members are unit leaders' greatest need. And the need is even greater in the midst of a pandemic that makes program delivery — and everything else — more challenging. Commissioners do "do" Membership; growing membership means supporting our unit leaders' efforts both to **recruit new members and deliver a program** that retains current members.

But how is that done when social distancing is the new normal? There are resources available, but we — and the unit leaders we serve — face a challenge: How do we quickly and easily access information to support membership recruitment and retention?

Our Commissioners website provides direct access to resources that are scattered across a variety of BSA websites.

- Recruitment Webinars, Pack and Den Recruiting, Virtual Recruitment Playbook, and Online Registration:  
<https://www.scouting.org/commissioners/starting-sustaining-and-growing-units/grow-the-unit/>
- Scouting @ Home and Virtual Meetings, program-specific, national, and local council initiatives:  
<https://www.scouting.org/commissioners/program-support-resources/>
- Pack Recruiting in a Pandemic  
<https://vimeo.com/450279270>
- Troop Recruiting in a Pandemic  
<https://vimeo.com/450206981>
- Internet Charter Renewal  
<https://www.scouting.org/commissioners/internet-rechartering/>
- Restart Scouting Checklist  
<https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/HealthSafety/pdf/680-693.pdf>



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As additional resources become available, we'll add them to the appropriate section of the Commissioners website. We'll also build them into roundtable content. Because roundtable *is* Unit Service and another tool, we have to make it easier for unit leaders to get the information they need to be successful.

Today, recruiting and retaining members is our focus as commissioners. Throughout this issue, you will find thoughts, tips, and tools to support you. They will help you be that single best resource our unit leaders need today and throughout the coming year.

On the up trail ...



# More Commissioners Means More Scouts

We all know the BSA has seen a steady decline in membership during the last several years. Sadly, this is not new news. The good news is that commissioners are uniquely positioned to help increase membership.

Better program attracts more youth. If Scouts are enjoying the adventure we promised them, they will tell their friends. Once their friends experience that adventure, they will join the BSA. Likewise, when the Scout's parent(s)/guardian(s) sees that adventure realized in the lives of their child or the child in their care, they will tell other parents/guardians. That positive word of mouth leads to more Scouts.

The promise of this adventure is realized when each unit has a robust, engaging, fun program. Simply stated, outstanding program leads to outstanding youth experiences, and outstanding youth experiences leads to more youth.

Fortunately, commissioners can help improve the unit's program. That outcome comes from steady, faithful unit service. Unfortunately, it is hard for a commissioner to provide "game-changing" unit service to four or five units. Clearly, we need more commissioners. Imagine if every commissioner had no more than three units to serve. This possibility is within reach if we simply dedicate ourselves to recruiting more commissioners and retain more of the commissioners we have.

How can we effectively recruit new commissioners? Here are two simple ideas that each commissioner can immediately employ:

1. Make a personal commitment to commissioner recruiting. We cannot defer commissioner recruiting to others. While helpful in coordinating recruitment, it's doubtful that an assistant district commissioner and/or assistant council commissioner with designated recruiting responsibilities can recruit enough commissioners for the district or council. More importantly, each commissioner must embrace the idea that recruiting is our most fundamental challenge. Every commissioner must share the work of recruiting.

In the October 2018 edition of *The Commissioner* newsletter, then-National Commissioner Ellie Morrison is quoted as saying, "Ensuring a great Scouting experience for every member. We all need to 'own' this and do what we can to make it happen." In this sense, every commissioner must "own" commissioner recruiting and do what we can to increase the number of commissioners.

2. Widen the net. We cannot limit our search for commissioners to just current BSA volunteers. That finite pool is not deep enough to yield the number of additional commissioners needed to provide adequate unit service to improve each unit's program. Instead, we need to also look outside the BSA for people with the "right stuff" to serve youth. Ask yourself the following question: Who do I know from work, school, and/or my community who has a servant's heart? Write down their names. Ponder the list. Ask those on the list to join our team. We can train them and mentor them.



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While certainly helpful, BSA experience is not a prerequisite to commissioner service. Dedication, commitment, and energy are the keys to unit service. But don't take my word for it. Ask a unit leader this question: Would you take a volunteer with little or no BSA experience who is completely dedicated to the success of your unit, who will be consistently available to serve the unit, who will show up to unit meetings and events, who will be committed to take the training needed to understand the mechanics of the BSA, and who, when they don't know the answer to a question, will commit to finding the answer for the unit leader? I submit that most unit leaders would accept this type of engaged partner in the success of their unit.

Recruiting this type of servant leader for commissioner service from within and without the BSA will positively impact the unit's program and thereby the experience of the Scouts in that unit. Such servant leaders are not only found on the current rolls of the BSA, they are found in your neighborhoods.

Following these two steps will significantly improve commissioner recruiting. It's a simple but effective plan: A personal commitment to commissioner recruiting and looking everywhere for the servant leaders. And it will yield results.

If we want more Scouts, we need better unit program. There is no other volunteer better positioned to support better unit program. Indeed, more commissioners does mean more Scouts.



# How Marketing and Communication Support Membership

Commissioners should view membership as a key measure of unit health. Membership tells us if Scouts are enjoying the program their unit offers. Commissioners play a key role in membership because they can share a perspective both outside the unit and over time. Of course, we must be careful about how we share these insights. Rather than giving units answers, we need to ask questions like: “What have you considered doing?” and “Are there any additional options?” Also, we need to see if they have answered some questions that are useful to their customers, such as:

- Why should a student join Scouting?
- Why should a student join your unit, or what makes your unit special?
- Why should a parent add Scouting with your unit to their list of things to do?

Once we know what they want to say, we need to find out how they will share these answers with their customers. You can ask questions such as:

- Will they use social media?
- Will they use a friend-to-friend campaign?
- Do they have access to school folders or school digital resources?
- Do they have access to emails and phone numbers for potential Scout families?

Although this article might sound like it is targeting packs and fall recruitment, it is not. The answers to these questions should be on the tip of the tongue of every Scout leader — especially new member coordinators — in a troop, crew, ship, club, and post.

How do these units get new members? Have they tried direct recruiting like some girl troops have been doing, or are they relying just on Webelos-to-Scout transitions?

One of the easiest ways to grow is to retain members. Many units do a great job getting Scouts in the front door. Do you know how many Scouts leave their unit each year? What percentage of Scouts who join are with the unit in one, two, four years, etc.? Do the math. Write it down. Example: 10 Scouts join Lions. Eight remain at Tigers, which is a 20% loss. Seven remain at Wolf. Six remain at Bear. Five join Webelos for the first year. Four stick around for Webelos II. That is a 60% loss through the Cub Scout journey.

What do you think would happen if we put as much effort into retaining Scouts as we put into getting them to join? I look forward to your answers.



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# Supporting Membership Growth and Retention With Technology, Part I

## Conducting Virtual Meetings, BeAScout Pin Management, Scoutbook Messaging, and Online Registration

A quick internet search will find that one of the key components of membership growth and retention is “the personal touch,” not something usually associated with technology. In fact, if anything, the COVID-19 pandemic has probably given many of us too much technology as we carry on business virtually. Who would have thought that kids would be telling their parents they don’t want to spend any more time in front of a video screen? Certainly, as commissioners, we want to encourage our units to continue to keep the OUTING in Scouting as much as possible. However, at times there are no alternatives, and you might need to use technology to meet. Virtual meetings are better than no meetings, which could lead units to stagnate and probably lose members.

Where can commissioners get information on how to conduct virtual meetings? The BSA offers several resources, which can be found at the following locations: [News for Commissioners](#), Scouting @ Home and Virtual Meetings in the [Program Support Resources](#), and Virtual Roundtable Resources at [Roundtable Support](#). Since information is constantly updated, check these resources frequently.

One of the most important things a unit can do to help membership recruiting efforts is make sure their BeAScout pin information is accurate. Not too long ago, BSA moved the location of where a unit’s Key 3 (plus Key 3 delegates) need to go to **My.Scouting** to update their BeAScout unit pin



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information to **Organization Manager**. As seen in the screen shot below, once in **Organization Manager**, the user needs to shift from the default tab to the Unit Pin tab to update their information. Once the unit has updated their BeAScout pin information, a best practice is to go into [BeAScout.org](http://BeAScout.org) and verify that the information displayed is correct and the unit is showing up on the map in the right place.

A screenshot of the my.Scouting Organization Manager interface. The page title is "Pack 0032 Romney 1st United Methodist Church". The left sidebar shows navigation options: "Organization Manager", "Settings", and "Unit Pin" (highlighted with a red box). The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column is titled "Unit Information" and includes sections for "Pin Mode" (radio buttons for "Only Allow the Council to Update Pin Information" and "Allow Units to Update Pin Information"), "Appear on BeAScout:" (toggle switch), "Allow People to Apply Online:" (toggle switch), "Contact Information" (with fields for Contact Person, Phone, and Email), "Unit Website" (with a text input field), and "Additional Unit Information" (with a text input field). The right column is titled "Unit Pin Preview" and shows the unit's details: "Pack 0032 Romney 1st United Methodist Church", address "49 N High St, Romney WV, 26757", contact information for Frederick Hillenbrand, and a "Request More Information" button. Below this is a section "Fields to Display on Unit Pin:" with toggle switches for "Unit Meeting Address:", "Contact Person's Name:", "Phone Number:", and "Contact Email:". The top of the page has a navigation bar with "Go Back", "my.Scouting | Organization Manager", and a user profile for "Welcome, Frederick Hillenbrand".



Communication is a key to any organization, especially when not meeting physically, and BSA has a free unit communication tool within **Scoutbook**. Once a leader has logged on to **Scoutbook** for their specific unit, they simply navigate to the **Send Message** button where they will be presented a roster of all the leaders, Scouts, and Scouts' connections that have been added to the individual Scout's profile.

Some of the features of the **Scoutbook Send Message** function include the ability to send a 160-character text message, as well as a much more extensive email to all or individually selected unit members and their connections. Sending can be done either BCC or not. Additionally, through email you can send files and include upcoming unit events. Even better, **Scoutbook** sends these messages whether or not the person has activated their individual **Scoutbook** account, plus it will advise you of any members who have opted out of receiving messages.

A related **Scoutbook** communication feature is the unit's calendar, where you can schedule items and set reminders

that will be automatically sent out to selected members at indicated times.

A discussion of technology and membership growth would be incomplete without Online Registration. Online Registration consists of two tools: **Invitation Manager** and **Application Manager**. (Both send you to **Membership Manager**). With the **Invitation Manager** tab, you can manage your recruiting leads, including communicating to those leads that come to the unit via BeAScout. You can also copy a special QR code or URL for inclusion in recruiting materials that will direct a potential member to BSA's online application process and even send leads a link to join online. The **Application Manager** tab allows you to process online applications. It should be noted that not all councils allow the processing of adult leader applications online.

All the detailed training material for Online Registration, Pin Manager, and managing new member leads can be found at <https://www.scouting.org/resources/online-registration/>

☰ < 🏠 📅 Pack 32 Send Message

Wilson, Ashley ✓  
Madeleine Wilson ✓

Send Email Send Text

**Subject:**  
Welcome New Members!

**Message:** ⓘ  
Congratulations on joining our Pack. I look forward to seeing you at our next meeting this coming Wednesday at 7PM at the same location we met this week. Attached is the promised information sheet on uniforms.

📅 Insert Upcoming Events

**File Attachments:**  
Choose Files Uniform costs - 2020-09-06.pdf

Use BCC

**Send Message**

Upcoming events come directly from the calendar feature.  
BCC option hides the email addresses of all recipients and includes only your address in the To field.

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 SCOUTBOOK



# Supporting Membership Growth and Retention With Technology, Part II

## Social Media, Advancement Report, Membership Reports

Another technology tool that commissioners should be familiar with when assisting their units with membership growth is social media. Many units have a social media presence on Facebook, which can be used as an effective way to promote your unit for free, especially if you share your posts. For as little as a dollar a day, your unit can also purchase advertising, which can be combined with an advertising targeting process called geofencing. Many councils have partnered with the national service center to help with geofencing advertising campaigns, so you should check to see whether your council is already participating.

As I noted in the last issue of *The Commissioner*, I like the resources that BSA provides at the Marketing and Membership Hub <https://scoutingwire.org/marketing-and-membership-hub/>. At the Marketing and Membership Hub, you can find an abundance of resources for unit, council, and district recruiting. Personally, I like the short videos that can be found in the video materials and have found that including a 30-second video in my Facebook posts helps communicate our message.



EMPLOYEES VOLUNTEERS PARENTS MARKETING & MEMBERSHIP BSA BRAND CENTER SCOUTING NEWSROOM CEO'S CORNER CC

### Pack and Den Recruiting

- Overview
- Cub Scout Recruiting
- Sign-Up Night Unit Playbook
- Best Practices Success Story

### New-Unit Development

- Overview
- Chartered Organizations
- Adopt-A-School
- New Unit Sales Kits
- Unit Performance
- Commissioners
- Leadership Support Statements
- Testimonial Videos
- Faith in Scouting Videos
- Proof: How Scouting Does Work

### Marketing Support

- BSA Brand Center
- Scouting Logos
- Top Photos
- Top Videos**
- SEO Guide
- Build an Adventure Campaign
- BSA Brand Identity

### Council and District Recruiting

## “Families Like Mine” Testimonial Videos

One of the key insights from the BSA's Authenticity Gap study was that despite the American families see value in the Scouting program, they state that it simply is “no mine.” They know Scouting is great. They know it has tremendous impact on youth. But for whatever reason, they don't think it will work for them.

We strongly believe that Scouting can benefit all families, from all walks of life, and backgrounds. The videos below can be used for advertising purposes by councils and demonstrate that Scouting truly is for “families like yours.” The videos feature powerful testimonials from a diverse selection of Scouting families and parents who speak to the way Scouting impacts their children, their family, and their community.



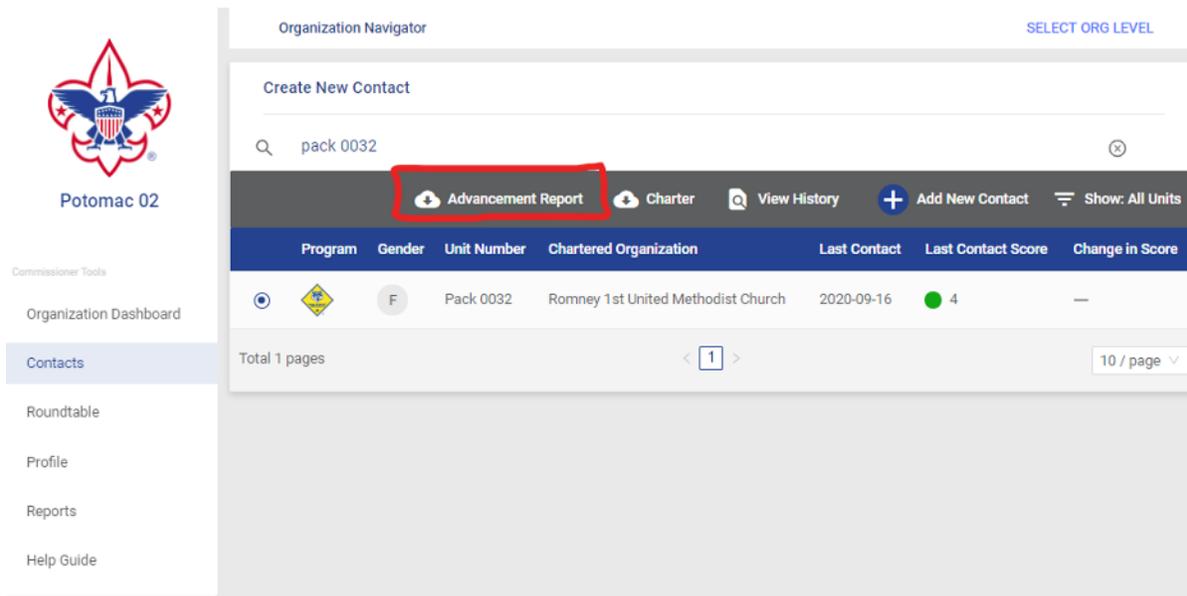
### Michelle

Busy Webelo Scoutmom, Michelle, shares her love of Scouting and her feeling that Scouting makes the little time we have with our kids.



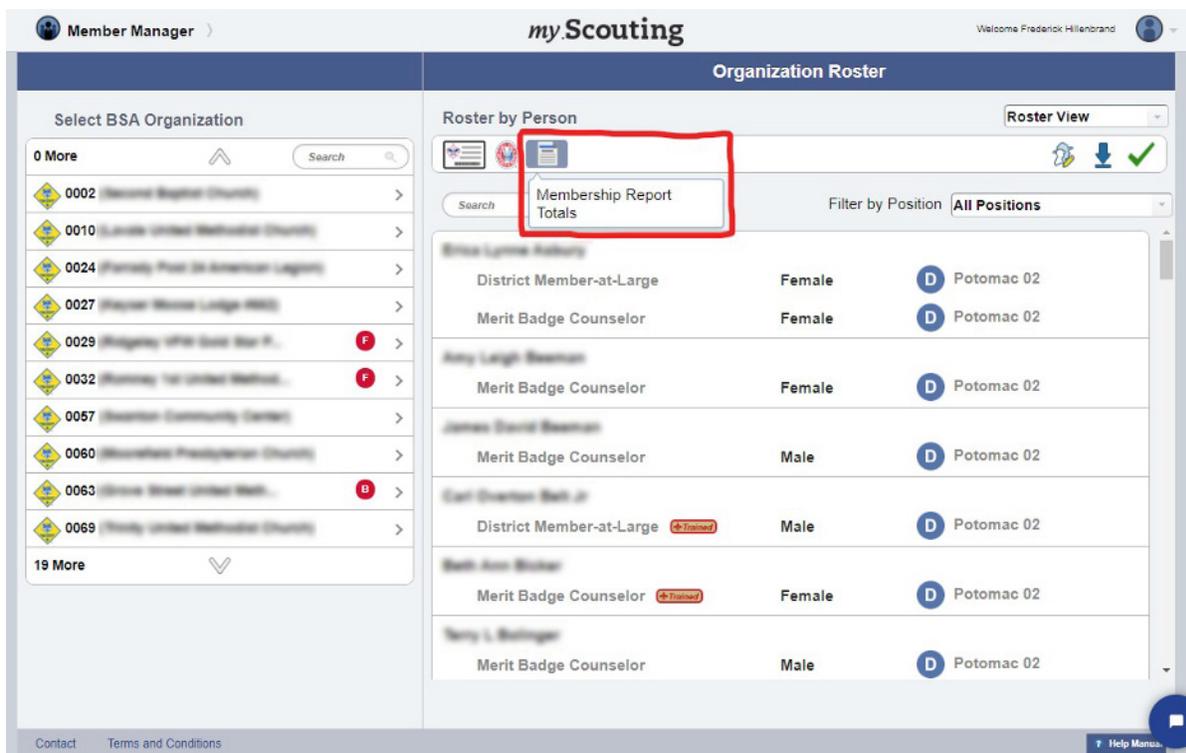
In addition to membership growth, technology can help us with membership retention. One of the easiest ways to keep a youth interested in Scouting is to make sure they are advancing and getting the appropriate recognitions. As a commissioner, you should periodically check a unit's advancement, a simple task now that you can access a unit's advancement using Commissioner Tools. To check on a unit's advancement, go to the **CONTACTS** tab in Commissioner Tools and click on the unit for which you want to see the advancement. The previously "grayed out" buttons will become available in the top dark gray

bar (under the search bar), and you can then click on the **Advancement Report** button. Once the report window opens, select the date range for the report and click on either the **RUN** button for an on-screen display or the **PDF** button for a PDF file. As a user tip, if there are no advancements in the date range selected, the **RUN** button will not return any results. (The **PDF** button will yield a page showing no advancements.) The advancement report feature in Commissioner Tools draws its data from the same database as Scoutbook and Internet Advancement.



One final membership growth and retention tool that was recently added this past year to the My.Scouting suite is the **Membership Totals Report** found in **Member Manager** at the district and council level. This user-generated report

provides a listing of units and membership that can be used to track and compare membership over time if you are keeping historical records. (See screenshots.)





New membership entered into ScoutNET will not appear in this Membership Totals Report until the next day.

Council **Washington County Council 007**  
 Organization Name **00700000**  
 Report Generated By **Frederick Hillenbrand**  
 Date Report Generated **09/30/2020**

Export to CSV

Export to PDF

RELOAD

Page 1 of 2 GO

Records: 32

DistrictName	Unit	Gender	Chartered Org	Male Youth	Female Youth	Total Youth	LDS Total Youth	Male Adults	Female Adults	Total Adults	LDS Unit	Expire Date
00700000	Pack 2	F	Second Baptist Church	22	4	26	0	7	2	9	N	12/31/2020
00700000	Pack 10	B	Lutheran United Methodist Church	19	1	20	0	4	3	7	N	12/31/2020
00700000	Pack 24	B	St. Luke's Episcopal Church	40	0	40	0	5	0	5	N	12/31/2020
00700000	Pack 27	B	Upper Merion Lodge #662	22	1	23	0	5	5	10	N	12/31/2020
00700000	Pack 29	F	Episcopal United Methodist Church	8	2	10	0	3	2	5	N	12/31/2020
00700000	Pack 32	F	St. Luke's Episcopal Church	41	14	55	0	5	11	16	N	12/31/2020
00700000	Pack 57	B	St. Luke's Episcopal Church	16	0	16	0	2	5	7	N	12/31/2020
00700000	Pack 60	B	St. Luke's Episcopal Church	21	0	21	0	3	2	5	N	12/31/2020
00700000	Pack 63	B	St. Luke's Episcopal Church	6	0	6	0	1	3	4	N	12/31/2020

# Getting Technology Help

By now, everyone hopefully has learned that volunteers should no longer obtain help directly from the national service center, including via telephone calls, emails and the JIRA service desk. Instead of contacting the national service center, volunteers are to contact their [local council](#) for help. As appropriate, the local council will elevate issues to the national service center for resolution. However, even with these changes, there are other resources available that volunteers can use to help with issues and questions related to BSA's IT applications, as follows:

- Ask a friend.
- Ask your local Commissioner Tools Champion (Commissioner Tools related help).

- Go to <https://help.scoutbook.com/> for help with Scoutbook or Internet Advancement.
- Click the "Forgot username/password?" button on the <https://my.scouting.org/> login page for login issues.
- Ask your local council.
- Send a message to the National Commissioner Service Team by completing the information found at the bottom of the Technology for Commissioners webpage <https://www.scouting.org/commissioners/tools/>

The screenshot shows the BSA website's navigation menu on the left, with 'Technology for Commissioners' highlighted. The main content area is titled 'Technology for Commissioners' and includes sections for 'Commissioner Tools Capabilities', 'Commissioner Tools Training', and 'Getting Started'. A red arrow points to the 'Technology for Commissioners' link in the sidebar.



Then scroll to the bottom of the page....

BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

Join Give Shop My.Scouting Login Search Menu

- November 8, 2019
- April 15, 2019
- February 2, 2019
  - SSO Self Helps

### Advanced Commissioner Tools Report Analysis Using Power Pivot Tables

In just a few seconds, Power Pivot tables can take your raw Commissioner Tools report data and create advanced reports. The Power Pivot table files were volunteer-developed and are NOT supported by the BSA's Information Delivery Group. Presently, these tools work only on a Windows-based computer with Excel 2013 and newer; they do not work with Excel 2010 and earlier. We hope to expand the supported user base in the future. For assistance with these Power Pivot tables, please contact [commissioner.support@scouting.org](mailto:commissioner.support@scouting.org) and a volunteer will respond to you.

[View Instructions for Creating Advanced Power Pivot Table Reports from Commissioner Tools Reports](#)

### QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, & SUGGESTIONS

Name  Email

Message

**SEND MESSAGE**

Visit Scouting Forums <https://discussions.scouting.org/> and go to either the **My Scouting Tools**, **Scoutbook**, or **BSA Commissioners** groups. You will need your my.scouting.org account to login to post comments. (There are several groups,

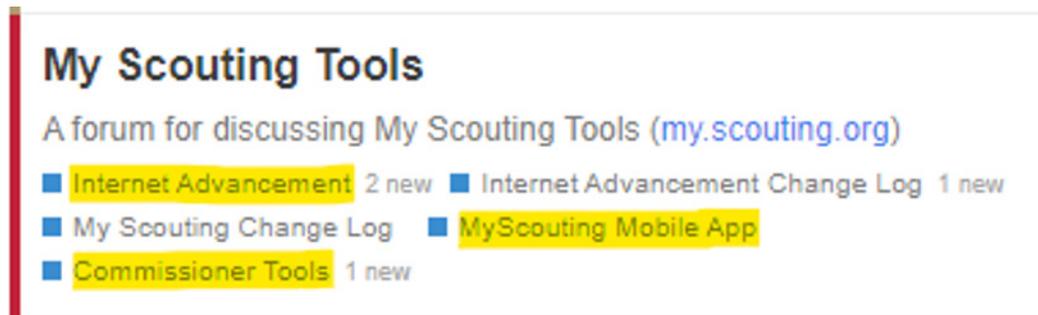
and users might have to scroll down the page to find the group they are looking for. E.g., the **BSA Commissioners** group is the very last listed group.)

### Scouting Forums

<b>Exploring Program</b> A forum for discussing the Exploring Program	5	Parliamentary Law Explorer Post Apr 21 Exploring Online Registration Nov '19 Eagle Rank Advancement Oct '19
<b>My Scouting Tools</b> A forum for discussing My Scouting Tools (my.scouting.org)	393	Activity Log Issue-Not Found in Active Unit* 5h Beascout pin location inaccurate 7h Loading Resources, please wait! 11h
<b>Scoutbook</b> Topics related to the use of Scoutbook can be addressed here	2639	User Friendly Additions to new "Activity Log" 6h My Scouting lists me as a Merit Badge Counselor, but Scoutbook R... 8h Scoutbook deleted my info 10h
<b>Scoutbook Council Champions</b> A Private Forum for Scoutbook Council Champions to aid in disseminating information and sharing council best practices	10	Exploring, clubs etc May 25 Units and advancement sync discrepancy May 20 Council Merge! Apr 29
<b>Staff</b> Private category for staff discussions. Topics are only visible to admins and moderators.	9	Help Again Please Apr 1 Forum Limitations Mar 27 User Request to Install Plugin Apr '19
<b>Lounge</b> A category exclusive to members with trust level 3 and higher.	2	Welcome to the Lounge May '18 Welcome to Scouting Forums — thanks for starting a new convers... Apr '19
<b>Moderators Lounge</b>	3	Archiving Messages in Moderators Inbox Apr '19 Forum announcement on facebook Apr '19 Welcome to the Moderator's Lounge May '18
<b>BSA Commissioners</b> A forum for discussing unit service.	56	September Family Fun Fest 12h Urgent message for Commissioner Tools Users 1d Roundtable Resources for September are now posted! 5d



Within the Scouting forums, there are three special subcategories in the **My Scouting Tools** group for very specific help: **Internet Advancement**, **MyScouting Mobile App**, and **Commissioner Tools**, which are highlighted in the following screenshot.



The direct links for each of these subcategories are:

- **Internet Advancement**  
<https://discussions.scouting.org/c/MyST/IA/2923>
- **MyScouting Mobile App**  
<https://discussions.scouting.org/c/MyST/MYST-APP/3518>
- **Commissioner Tools**  
<https://discussions.scouting.org/c/MyST/COMMISS-TOOLS/3539>  
Recognizing that commissioners may need to use the Commissioner Tools subcategory often, a special shortened URL has also been created: <https://tinyurl.com/CommToolsHelp>

A group of “super user” volunteers monitor these subcategories and work to resolve user issues as rapidly as possible.



# Trained Commissioners Are Better Equipped to Help Drive Membership Growth and Retention

Membership growth and retention is a key objective of the Boy Scouts of America. An adequate number of trained commissioners is an important element to making this objective a reality.

There are several tools available to commissioners to ensure they have the training needed both to perform their jobs effectively and to ensure there is an adequate number of trained commissioners. They will help the commissioner work directly with units to ensure they have the resources needed to continue to grow.

One of the first steps every commissioner should take is to complete basic training for their role. They will learn about their job responsibilities and can practice those skills with an experienced coach through the onboarding process.

Every commissioner should also strive to be a lifelong learner. Opportunities for this abound. An article in this newsletter discusses the portfolio of national-level training events: weeklong conferences, impact sessions, and virtual impact sessions. Each of these events provides opportunities to dive into topics that are of interest to the commissioner, and many support growth and retention.

There are many development resources for commissioners and local councils available on the Commissioners webpage. Read the accompanying article about the recent upgrade to the development pages and the many available resources. None of this information is static, and there are processes in place to ensure that materials are updated regularly. New resources will continue to be added to the site.

Each of us needs to own our personal development! What will you do in the next 30 days to ensure that you are equipped to help units grow?



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# Commissioner Development Website Update

The Commissioner Development team has implemented a complete redesign of the Commissioner Development section of the Commissioners website. You will be able to easily navigate to information about:

- Commissioner Basic Training
- College of Commissioner Science
- National Level Training Events
- Continuing Education
- Other Development Resources

The content has been organized to make development-related materials more accessible. The team will continue to make regular updates to existing materials and will also be adding new content as appropriate.

**Commissioners**

- News for Commissioners
- Your National Service Team
- Program Support Resources
- Journey to Excellence
- Commissioner Manuals and Resources
- Commissioner Development**
- National Level Training Events
- Exploring for Commissioners
- Commissioner Merchandise
- Commissioner Logos
- Commissioner Recruiting
- Commissioner Awards and Recognition
- The Commissioner Newsletter
- Roundtable Support
- Starting, Sustaining and Growing Units
- Technology for Commissioners
- Internet Charter Renewal

Home > Commissioners > Commissioner Development

## Commissioner Development

It is essential that commissioners are equipped to be successful! The Commissioner Development Team offers several resources to local councils and to individual commissioners. This includes:

- Commissioner Basic Training courses.
- College of Commissioner Science curriculum and resources to support local councils in delivery of a high-quality event.
- A full range of national level commissioner training events
- Resources to assist local councils and districts provide continuing education for commissioners

Follow the links below to explore the available resources.



### Basic Training

- Online Basic Training
- Instructor Led Basic Training Curriculum
- Onboarding Progress Sheets
- Curriculum updates
- Feedback on Curriculum



### College of Commissioner Science

- Curriculum for all degree programs
- Administrative resources
- Curriculum updates
- Feedback on Curriculum



### National Level Training Events

- Weeklong Conferences
- Weekend Impact Sessions
- Virtual Impact Sessions



### Continuing Education

- Monthly Council and District Training
- Annual Council Commissioner Conference



### Other Development Resources

- Training Codes for Commissioners
- Commissioner Tools Training
- Upcoming Colleges of Commissioner Science

Facebook Twitter Instagram Pinterest YouTube



# National Level Training Events

<https://www.scouting.org/commissioners/training/national/>

## Weeklong conferences

The 2021 schedule is complete, and we will be offering nine weeklong conferences. Details are available at the link above.

*Florida Sea Base*, January 10-16, 2021

- Technology for Commissioners

*Commissioners Week at Philmont Training Center*, June 6-12, 2021

- A Strong Unit Commissioner
- Empowering the District Commissioner Team
- Empowering the Council Commissioner Team
- Second Century Service — Updates on Unit Service
- Starting, Sustaining, and Growing Units
- Recruiting and Engaging Commissioners
- Serving All Units — Working with Venturing Crews, Sea Scout Ships, and Exploring Posts
- Leveraging Roundtable in Unit Service

## Impact Sessions

Weekend impact sessions are currently on hold due to COVID-19. They will resume as soon as it can safely be done.

## Virtual Impact Sessions

The development team has implemented virtual impact sessions, which are two-hour interactive training events. These sessions will occur monthly, and you can find additional information and registration information at the link above. We intend to continue to conduct virtual impact sessions into the foreseeable future.

Here are some comments from commissioners who have attended recent virtual impact sessions:

- “I like that it was a group of people who would have never met since we are from different regions and different council sizes.”
- “It was all helpful. I really liked the breakout session.”
- “I gained some new insights and encouragement regarding recruiting, which is often the hardest part of any role in the BSA. One key nugget was that I need to re-evaluate my current habit of only looking for experienced Scouters to serve as commissioners and open my mind to others that have a servant heart.”
- “A chance to hear from leaders in other councils who are facing similar challenges.”



# Supporting Membership by Sustaining and Growing our Units

A council's strategic plan will have a well-developed annual plan for retention and membership growth. The development of the plan comes from the needs of the council and is broken down by the districts. The council vice president of membership and the council commissioner need to work together to execute and communicate the plan that has been developed. It is essential that the plan is communicated to the district commissioners and disseminated down to the units by way of the unit commissioners. It's important to have a well-developed annual plan for retention and membership growth.

Retaining families is key to the continued health of the unit. How can commissioners help units retain the membership they currently have? The unit commissioner facilitates the detailed assessment self-evaluation process and the unit can discover their strengths and needs. It is important that the unit develops a strong annual program plan that ensures youth advancement. The commissioner can guide the unit to the resources needed to execute budgets to support the program and fundraising, along with a membership and succession plan.

This year has brought the meaning of having a Plan B to a new level. Most program plans needed to be modified. Commissioners helped guide unit leaders to the virtual resources needed. The role of the new member coordinator could have been used to check in on unit families. Having a healthy, engaged relationship with the chartering organization could offer alternatives to some of the challenges faced by the unit. The unit commissioner is the glue and grease.

Recruiting is a year-round activity. Many councils hold a large annual fall recruitment drive, and some may also have a spring recruitment drive, but units can recruit all year with peer-to-peer recruitment. Unit commissioners can remind unit leaders



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there is a recruiter patch award. They can assist a unit with planning and executing their own recruiting events and maintaining their BeAScout pin. Commissioners can assist with recruitment drives and youth talks at schools, civic organizations, festivals, and religious institutions. The unit membership plan should include year-round recruitment, and the unit commissioner can be an asset.



It is important to have a well-developed annual plan for retention and membership growth. Commissioners play an important role in communicating the plan from the council level down to the unit. Through commissioners, the retention and membership growth plan is communicated in some of the following ways:

- Roundtables
- Council and district newsletters
- Webpages
- Social media
- Direct contact by unit commissioner
- Webinars
- Virtual meetings

Commissioners help ensure resources are available to unit leaders to enable them to execute their retention and growth plans. It takes EVERYONE to execute the plan.



Peer-to-peer cards can be found in the BSA Brand Center.



# Rechartering = Membership Growth + Retention

Fall reflects a season of new growth for Cub Scout packs as students go back to school and new recruitment efforts are underway. Even in this COVID-19 environment, many packs have turned to online recruitment through Facebook groups or email flyers. In some places, drive-by banners or lawn signs are helping to get the message out that packs are meeting, and all are welcomed to join.

In addition, other units like troops, crews and ships are hosting planning meetings to lay out activities for the coming year, including outings and outdoor adventures as conditions permit. Despite the pandemic, Scouts at this level have learned to pivot by continuing to complete merit badges online or fulfilling rank requirements through virtual activities or other creative ideas. BSA national service center along with the support of local councils have come up with a whole set of resources to support **Scouting at Home** during these times.

Fall season also brings in **annual rechartering** activities, and this is where unit commissioners can help make a difference in **membership growth** and **retention**. Let's examine the first part, **membership growth**. During rechartering, a portion of the Internet Rechartering process is an accurate accounting of both youth and adult members. If they are not formally in the council roster, that means they are new or their application was not properly registered. This is an important first step to ensure that all members are accounted for, especially new ones.



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## Unit JTE Scorecard Summary for All Four Programs

				
<b>Planning &amp; Budget Regularly</b>	Regularly review for program & finances	Regularly review for program & finances	Regularly review for program & finances	Regularly review for program & finances
<b>Membership</b>	Recruit new youth Retain youth <u>Webelos transition</u>	Recruit new youth Retain youth <u>Webelos recruitment</u>	Recruit new youth Retain youth	Recruit new youth Retain youth
<b>Program</b>	Rank advancement <u>Outdoor activities</u> <u>Family/day camping</u> Service projects <u>Den &amp; pack meetings</u>	Rank advancement <u>Weekend campouts</u> <u>Long-term camping</u> Service projects Patrol method	<u>Adventures</u> <u>Youth leadership</u> <u>Personal growth</u> Service	<u>Activities</u> <u>Youth leadership</u> <u>Advancement</u> Service
<b>Volunteer Leadership</b>	Recruit leadership Trained leaders	Recruit leadership Trained leaders	Recruit leadership Trained leaders	Recruit leadership Trained leaders

*Underline - Program specific categories*



The second part focuses on **retention** through quality programs as measured by the unit **Journey to Excellence (JTE)** scorecard. Even though the actual scoring of how well the units are doing takes place once a year, JTE serves as an aspirational goal where units should land. It covers four important areas that strongly influence quality programs overall: **Planning & Budget, Membership, Program, and Volunteer Leadership**. Deficiency in any one area can be detrimental to unit quality over time. It is important that unit commissioners identify these challenge areas early on with a detailed assessment and a plan for unit leadership to work toward achieving before rechartering.

Given the challenges to outdoor activities this year, BSA has modified JTE requirements for at-home or virtual meetings.



## Latest Program Updates for the Commissioner Corps

Here are the fall 2020 updates within each of the BSA program communities to help our commissioner corps stay on top of current news, training, and program changes. Some BSA programs have their own updated websites, so we will point you directly to them.

Given the challenges of the current COVID-19 pandemic, the Commissioners webpage under [Program Support Resources](#) continues to provide the latest resource links on conducting **Virtual Meetings, Virtual Merit Badge, and Boards of Review** from home.

Please continue to monitor the National Council's COVID FAQs page at <https://www.scouting.org/coronavirus/covid-19-faq/>. This page is regularly updated with the latest temporary program changes that are applicable to all levels of Scouting. A recent one that you might find helpful: The ability of local councils to grant time extensions for **Eagle/Summit/Quartermaster** candidates has been extended through Dec. 31, 2020.

### Cub Scouting Den Leader Experience

As Cub Scout packs move into the new program year, commissioners can provide significant support to den leadership in several ways. Remember that many den leaders will be brand new to the program and even returning den leaders can use extra help. New or old den leaders can benefit from the **Den Leader Experience (DLE)** [https://youtu.be/0c1k\\_xwCFs](https://youtu.be/0c1k_xwCFs).

The Den Leader Experience is Scouting's online tool for tracking Cub Scout advancement, and it makes it easier than ever for den leaders to prepare for and lead meetings. First, commissioners should be sure that the pack is onboarded to Scoutbook. Work with the pack administrator to onboard the unit and then onboard each den leader. Rather than having to juggle leader books and other resources, den leaders will be able to do everything they need from within this free web-based app, from organizing meetings for the year to preparing for the next meeting to tracking attendance and advancement. They

You can locate the latest copy of the JTE on the BSA [website](#). Additional information about these changes can be found in the following Bryan on Scouting [interview](#) with Neil Lupton, chair of the BSA's National Assessment and Evaluation Committee.

2020 will be remembered as one of the most challenging years for the BSA, and it was felt across the board. Besides camping and outdoor activities, membership was strongly affected by virtual meetings and the lack of in-person meetings. Unit commissioners can make a positive impact in helping units recharter in a timely and efficient manner. At the same time, regular visits and being a resource to units will help them execute programs in new ways to keep Scouts engaged and participating. This can only lead to positive results for rechartering and youth service overall.

will even be able to communicate with parents of absent Scouts about what their child needs to do at home to get caught up.

Cub Scout required adventures for each rank have been thoughtfully organized, making planning meetings for the year simpler than ever. If the Scout attends the meetings and the den leader simply keeps attendance in the web-based app, advancement is automatically updated. The Den Leader Experience streamlines and simplifies work for leaders so the den can be more prepared for Cub Scouting adventures.

The Den Leader Experience is a tool designed to help den leaders get started quickly with the before, during, and after of a den meeting. Check it out, commissioners, in the Scoutbook sandbox area at <https://help.scoutbook.com/knowledge-base/den-leader-experience-demo-environment-sb/>.

### Scouts BSA

The window for Eagle boards of review of the **Inaugural Class of Female Eagle Scouts** (<https://www.scouting.org/program-updates/inaugural-class-of-female-eagle-scouts/>) is from Oct. 1, 2020, to Feb. 8, 2021. As such, all Eagle Scout credentials will be dated Feb. 8, 2021, so that we commemorate this milestone alongside the recognized "birthday" of the Boy Scouts of America.

This adjustment was implemented so Scouts were not unfairly prohibited from being part of the inaugural class due to COVID-19; however, we recognize that the extended window means that participating Scouts could experience a delay in receiving their Eagle Scout credentials if we waited to process all of the applications as originally planned.

After receiving significant feedback confirming that concern, we have decided to administratively adapt the plan so that the national organization will process the credentials of the inaugural class in batches on a rolling basis starting in October as they are received. You can find more details by visiting the **Scouts BSA Program Updates** page at <https://www.scouting.org/programs/scouts-bsa/program-updates/>.



On this page, you can also find many more useful resources, like the recordings of past **Scouts BSA Office Hours**. These office hours include answers to questions about program updates and sharing best practices from troops nationwide. Commissioners, please ask your unit leaders to keep an eye on their emails since invitations are sent directly to all registered adult leaders in the Scouts BSA program.

If you have not heard yet, recently the BSA and the **Environmental Protection Agency** have signed a memorandum of understanding to develop a new Environmental Education Award Program and Special Award. The EPA-sponsored award will challenge Scouts to learn about, explore, and conserve the world around them as part of an awareness campaign to educate the public about the EPA's accomplishments during its first 50 years and develop the vision for the next 50 years. The program will also provide the EPA with opportunities to educate BSA member councils and leadership about priority initiatives, including Trash Free Waters, Winning on Reducing Food Waste, and Healthy Schools. You can find out more about this initiative in this article: <https://www.scoutingnewsroom.org/press-releases/epa-boy-scouts-announce-collaboration-on-environmental-education-award-program-and-special-award/>.

## Venturing

As you probably know by now, due to the extraordinary circumstances occurring in 2020, benchmarking 2019 to 2020 at the district and council level for Journey to Excellence is not constructive, and basing 2021 standards on 2020 for districts and councils is equally inappropriate.

For these reasons, the Journey to Excellence **recognition** program for districts and councils is discontinued immediately. The unit-level recognition program will continue, and recognition patches will be available for units.

The council-level Venturing version of this award, however, is still very much in action. This seems like a good time to review the criteria and provide you with some links that you will find helpful.

## Council Venturing Journey to Excellence

This award is designed to measure a council's Venturing program through analyzing various aspects of their growth in categories such as membership, trainings, events, and awards. Councils that earn the JTE award will be presented a dated, framed certificate at the National Annual Meeting.

### Planning

We highly recommend using the Journey to Excellence worksheet as you plan your year! For planning your 2021 Venturing year, use this 2020 Journey to Excellence Council Venturing scorecard. Your results from 2020 will be recognized in 2021.

**Here is the link:** [https://i9peu1ikn3a16vg4e45rqj17-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/512-50020-Council-Venturing-JTE-Scorecard\\_FPO.pdf](https://i9peu1ikn3a16vg4e45rqj17-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/512-50020-Council-Venturing-JTE-Scorecard_FPO.pdf)

### Submission Process

Fill out the following Council Venturing Journey to Excellence application and turn it in by Feb. 15, 2021, to [Venturing.NationalOfficers@scouting.org](mailto:Venturing.NationalOfficers@scouting.org).

All councils are highly encouraged to submit the form even if they do not qualify for an award level.

### Scoring

- Bronze Level: 1700-2399
- Silver Level\*: 2400-2999
- Gold Level\*: 3000-3500

\* If the Core Requirements score is greater than or equal to 1,700, a council is eligible for the bronze recognition and may earn additional points toward silver and gold in the Elective Requirements category.

### Worth checking out ...

Marketing Toolbox:

<https://www.scouting.org/programs/venturing/crew-resources/marketing-toolbox/>

### Request a NVOA Member

On select occasions, National VOA Officers and Advisors may be available to attend Venturing events to inspire others, present trainings, lead discussions, act as keynote speakers, or explain opportunities available in Venturing throughout the nation. If you would like a national officer/Advisor to attend your council, area, or region event, fill out the following form.

#### Please note:

- The request form must be submitted no later than four weeks prior to the event.
- All requests are subject to officer and Advisor availability and resources.
- If approved, the host event is responsible for the NVOA officer/Advisor housing, event registration fee, meals during the event, and transportation to and from the airport (if applicable).

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeueLgQVeno6\\_4qZ9M6GQw0ey\\_1qPpHaabF1fDiMJWpIE\\_Hg/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeueLgQVeno6_4qZ9M6GQw0ey_1qPpHaabF1fDiMJWpIE_Hg/viewform)

This is a great opportunity to have the Venturing program represented in your council, area and/or regional board meetings. Having youth present and visible to your executive boards and business meetings brings to life the extraordinary leadership program that is Venturing. Ask them to talk about how they envision impact on units, growing membership, and training and engaging both youth and adults. You will not be disappointed in their vision of what the program is and can be.

### Sea Scouts

The recent outpouring of support for **Sea Scouting** to remain a separate branch within Scouting is evidence of the program's strength as well as the passion of our youth and adult volunteers! Friedrich Nietzsche said, "That which does not kill us makes us stronger," and I think that is true of Sea Scouts after the recent challenges. We are in many ways stronger than ever — we just need to harness that strength to generate growth.

**Recharter time** is coming up soon — please make sure your units are good to go. Last year, Sea Scouting had way too



many recharter failures. These take time and energy to track and correct, and time could be better spent on starting ships. We need to retain all our ships! The national commodore has asked that a commissioner be assigned to all Sea Scout units to ascertain the health of our units as well as ensure recharter is completed. District commissioners and assistant district commissioners should already be ensuring this action is complete but, in a review of the Southern Region, there were 60 ships without an assigned unit commissioner.

Perhaps this is due to Sea Scouting being “different” from other units. Let’s dispel that myth. Sea Scout ships are Scouting units — just like troops, packs, or crews. The focus of Sea Scouting is aquatics activities, which includes sailing, paddle sports (the fastest growing ship type), and SCUBA. How a ship functions and how a ship’s committee works to support the unit is no different than any other. As commissioners, we can do this!

In August, **Sea Scouting** made a change to the Sea Promise to ensure inclusivity. The Sea Promise is an important part of our program, but as William Menninger (author of the original Handbook for Skippers in the 1930s) explained, “[the] Sea Promise is a set of instructions which should be observed by anyone on a boat. It does not replace or parallel the Scout Oath or Law.” One significant element of the Sea Promise that

was questionable was the last line, which read “seek to preserve the motto of the sea: women and children first.” While that was the original version, there was a period of time (during part of the time when we were Sea Explorers) when the last line instead was “to let those who are weaker and less able than myself come first.” It isn’t quite clear exactly when or why it was changed back to the original, but the National Sea Scout Support Committee made the decision that it needed to be fixed. Returning to the verbiage we used as Sea Explorers was considered, but an even simpler form was agreed on: “to let those less able come first.” That change was approved by the National Program Development Committee and is now official.

### **Sea Promise (2020):**

*As a Sea Scout, I promise to do my best:  
To guard against water accidents  
To know the location and proper use of the lifesaving  
devices on every boat I board  
To be prepared to render aid to those in need  
To let those less able come first.*

Want to read about Sea Scouts in action? Join the Sea Scouting Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/seascoutsbsa>



# Exploring Membership and Retention in the Face of COVID-19 Concerns

The COVID-19 pandemic has definitely placed significant burden on membership and retention, whether in traditional BSA programs or Exploring. As unit commissioners and Exploring service team commissioners (a.k.a. Exploring commissioners), what should we be encouraging our Exploring units to be doing at this time?

Remember the single most crucial component in the retention of Exploring units' current youth membership is regular and consistent meetings and hands-on exercises. Are your Exploring units meeting regularly either virtually or (if allowed) in-person, observing state, county, city and/or participating organization COVID-19 social-distancing and meeting location participant numbers restrictions? If your Exploring units can meet only virtually, there are several free or relatively low-cost options available, such as Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, Cisco Webex, GoToMeeting, and Zoom. With these tools, participants can see and interact with each other online, and conduct meetings that include training and even hands-on exercises. Zoom allows for breakout rooms/sessions for meeting participants to form small teams during leadership or career-specific skills training and/or virtual hands-on exercises. They can meet for a designated period of time and then return to the main post or club online meeting. Remember that with online meetings, Youth Protection guidelines still apply, i.e., the requirement for two-deep adult leadership and no one-on-one contact. As for the online platform you select, adhere to the digital safety and online Scouting guidelines outlined at <https://www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/safety-moments/digital-safety-and-online-scouting-activities/>

A couple of great sources of virtual meeting information include both our Northeast and Southern Regions Exploring Chairs Dick Davies [richard.davies.nyc@gmail.com](mailto:richard.davies.nyc@gmail.com) and Ben Turner [btturner@consortinc.com](mailto:btturner@consortinc.com). They are holding online monthly or bimonthly meetings (which are open to all) where ideas and examples of virtual Exploring meeting topics are shared by their regions' Exploring adult leadership. Also, Western Region Exploring Chair Dan Walters [scouterdan92@gmail.com](mailto:scouterdan92@gmail.com) will be starting similar meetings soon.

Another source for virtual meeting information is the National Exploring Live Hour, which is a monthly Zoom video conference that helps Exploring volunteers and professionals grow, support, and learn more about Exploring. The program includes sharing best practices from within our councils, highlighting successful growth campaigns, and inspiring new ideas through various trainings. It also offers an opportunity for local councils to collaborate with area, regional, and national counterparts to generate innovative solutions to real-life Exploring challenges. For the remainder of 2020, the dates for National Exploring Live Hours, which start at 1:00 pm Central Time, are:

- Oct. 21 (main topics: Safety First Review, Journey to Excellence and Exploring Officers Association)
- Nov. 11 (main topics: Exploring Program Resources and Awards & Recognition)
- Dec. 2 (main topics: Fundraising and Cultivation Events)



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National Commissioner Service  
Exploring Chair  
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You may register for each of the National Exploring Live Hour Zoom presentations by clicking on <https://bit.ly/2020EXPLiveHour>

If we were growing Exploring membership in a non-COVID-19 environment, our Exploring units would be currently hosting in-person open houses to attract new members. (In some locations, in-person may still be possible.) Just like Exploring unit meetings going virtual, the same can take place with open houses. (Remember Youth Protection guidelines still apply: two-deep adult leadership and no one-on-one contact.) The key to holding an open house is advertising to prospective youth members that it is going to be either an in-person or a virtual open house. Promoting an in-person or a virtual open house might seem like a daunting task, but units should draw good participation if they carry out the suggestions (with as many as they are permitted to accomplish) in the Exploring Guidebook for Post & Club Leaders –Youth & Adult (see pages 44-45), which is found at <http://www.exploring.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Exploring-Guidebook-Sept2017.800-10018.pdf>.

NOTE: Virtual open house registration will allow you to obtain the youth participant name, email address and phone number, which you can use for follow-up queries.

As for the virtual open house, here is a sample agenda:

**1. Greeting (15 min prior to meeting start) by the virtual meeting host**

Greet and welcome the young people as they enter the virtual open house.

**2. Introduction and Welcome (3 min) by the post Advisor/club Sponsor**

The post Advisor or club Sponsor starts the meeting with a welcome, and all participants of the adult and youth leadership team introduce themselves.



**3. Greetings (7 min) from the participating organization's executive officer or representative**

The head of the participating organization or his/her representative gives the group a brief background on the organization's interest in sponsoring this Explorer post or club and the organization's commitment to this unit. This brief talk should be motivational in tone.

**4. Icebreaker (10 min) by club or post Exploring youth officer**

Conduct an exercise that will help stimulate the participants to speak more freely by requiring everyone to talk for a few minutes. Games such as the interview game or famous person ID game will help break the ice.

**5. Description of Exploring and purpose of Exploring unit (7 min) by club or post Exploring youth officer**

Consider creative ways to explain the meaning of Exploring.

**6. Description of upcoming program of activities (3 min) by post Advisor/club Sponsor**

Review your planned program, with dates and times, for the next three months of the unit's calendar.

**7. Hands-on activity (30-40 min) by club or post Exploring youth officer or member**

Youth officer or member conducts a virtual hands-on activity that they have designed for participants. Use breakout rooms if available with your online platform. This should be a new experience and one of the most fun activities planned for the unit's upcoming year.

**8. Participation process (5 min) by post Advisor/club Sponsor**

Explain the participation process specific to the new Exploring participant. Explain that the national participation fee includes liability insurance and activities, awards, and scholarships supported by Exploring. Answer any questions.

**9. Invitation to join (20 min) by post Advisor/club Sponsor**

Invite the virtual open house participants to join the club or post. Answer any questions. For those who indicate a desire to join, email them the appropriate application: youth application if under 18 and adult/Exploring participant (EP) application if 18 and older. (Note: Follow up with the undecided participants within a week to see if they have any questions you could answer to help them decide to join the unit.)

**10. Closing comments (5 min) from the participating organization's executive officer or representative**

Give a brief, motivational send-off. Be sure everyone knows the date, time, location (in-person or virtual), and program for the next post or club meeting.



# Monthly Roundtables Provide Timely Training for Growing and Retaining Membership

Roundtable commissioners play a key role in providing unit service. Through hot topics, safety moments, and program-specific breakouts, the monthly roundtable offers unit leaders a time to give and receive information, participate in timely training, and network with other Scouters in the district and/or council. Since August, we have placed a sharp focus on recruiting new Cub Scouts and their families into our existing packs and retaining those Scouts currently registered in Scouts BSA troops. Units in every council have been affected by the pandemic but many have persevered, holding virtual meetings or providing socially distant outdoor activities. The same can be said for roundtable. We have heard of your successes hosting virtual roundtables, and I commend you for your tenacity and “stick-to-it-iveness.”

As we move into the fall, you will find frequent updates to the Roundtable Support webpage, including FAQs, planning resources, updated job descriptions, and much more. These tools exist to help you, roundtable, and unit commissioners, better serve the units in your care. After all, roundtable IS unit service and every commissioner may serve as a champion for monthly roundtables in the district and/or council. Here are some of the upcoming nationally supported breakout topics for the next few months:

- **Cub Scouting Breakouts**

- October First Impressions of Your Pack (New Member Coordinators)
- November Keeping Your Cub Scouts Having Fun
- December Pinewood Derby Hacks

- **Scouts BSA Breakouts**

- October Developing High-Performing Youth Leaders
- November How to Conduct Socially Distanced Ceremonies
- December Introduction of the Diversity/Equity/Inclusion Merit Badge

As you can see, the focus is on family, fun, getting outside, and advancement. Young people join Scouting to have fun and be with their friends in the outdoors. With the challenges we face today, roundtable will help you serve your units by providing these timely discussion topics. Together we can grow membership in our movement and keep existing Scouts involved and excited.

On behalf of the roundtable team, I want to thank you for your dedication to Scouting. We are excited about our new formats and look forward to hearing your feedback as we continue to serve you, the commissioners, so that you, in turn, may be equipped with the tools you need to help your units and the youth we all serve.



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



# What Can Commissioners Do to Support Membership Retention and Growth?

Unit service — one of the four functions of a council or district — is the most direct commissioner function. The other three — Membership, Finance, and Program — belong to the council executive board and district committee. So why should commissioners be talking about membership and retention — isn't that someone else's job? Although not a good argument, it is an argument. A much better argument is that we are all in this together. Commissioners, like every other volunteer or professional, are part of a team whose purpose is to support the mission, vision, aims, and methods of the Boy Scouts of America as a whole, as well as the goals of our council, our district, and our units. Membership is the lifeblood of BSA. Our whole purpose is wrapped up in providing better program for every possible youth. Consequently, membership growth and retention are crucial to us all. A unit might not see membership growth as a critical factor for its success, but if it doesn't, is that unit meeting the same mission and vision you and I support?

Commissioners are not the council or district membership committee, but we should do everything in our power to support that membership committee in reaching the goals of the council and the district. But how can we really do that? Let's look at three commissioner positions to see what each might do to support membership growth and retention.

The council commissioner has two primary membership tasks. As a member of the council Key 3, the council commissioner should obtain, review, understand, distribute, and promote the council's membership plan. As the chief morale office of the council, the council commissioner should promote the plan with the council commissioner cabinet to make sure that all know what their roles are and to support the critical member recruitment process.

Once the council commissioner distributes the council membership plan, the district commissioner (as a member of the district Key 3) should review, understand, distribute, and promote the plan with any refinements and localization built in by the district committee. As the chief morale officer of the district, the district commissioner should promote the plan with his or her unit commissioner team to make sure that all know what their roles should be.

Upon receiving the district membership plan, the unit commissioner should promote an attitude among unit leaders that we all want to enhance the experiences of every boy and girl through Scouting. By keeping a positive attitude and extending the BSA mission and vision to every youth in the community, the unit commissioner becomes a major player in membership growth.

Membership retention is an easy sell — support our units in providing better program to more youth and retention is key — the core mission of a unit commissioner.



*Jim Libbin*  
Western Regional Commissioner  
[jlibbin@nmsu.edu](mailto:jlibbin@nmsu.edu)



# Supporting Membership Retention and Growth — Got Ideas? Share Them!

It is the time of year when councils and districts are asking units to focus on two important elements of membership in the BSA: growth and retention. While the pandemic is offering new challenges to membership recruiting, there are opportunities to add tools to the toolbox we have at the ready. While distributing flyers in schools might not be possible, we can distribute them through some of the social media platforms. Facebook, Instagram, and some apps that are private social networks for your neighborhood are a couple of ways to promote unit recruiting efforts. Nextdoor helpfully narrows its scope to a block-by-block radius. Front Porch Forum is another popular community-building platform. As commissioners, we can show units these new recruiting avenues, and they just might become permanent recruiting tools to add to the toolbox. The [BSA Brand Center](#) has sample Facebook ads that can be customized.

Access to schools for school nights might not be possible, so how about community centers, shopping centers, or even drive-thru events in church parking lots? The important thing is to promote Scouting. Have your units ask each family to invite another family to join (peer-to-peer recruiting). Have unit parents share a Facebook promotion with all their friends. Yard signs with contact information on them can drive potential Scouts to BeAScout.org, but the unit should have up-to-date pin information posted.

These are just a few suggestions for helping your units promote Scouting and get their recruitment efforts jump-started. Missed out in September and October? Remember recruiting is a year-round process!

The second prong of membership is retention. We all know retention is best accomplished with a great program and fun



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activities for Scouts. Check in with your units to see what they have planned and encourage them to have lots of activities that will keep the Scouts active. Creative meetings via a virtual platform can keep a Scout's interest if there is an interactive component to it. Outdoor activities are a safe bet during the pandemic, so help them be creative with those activities. Remember, even as the weather might be getting chillier, there are still many outdoor things to do. Keeping Scouts active and advancing will yield Scouts who stay in the program.

## Questions and Answers

**Question:** How do I find out about the latest BSA announcements?

**Answer:** The official communication outlet for BSA volunteers is Scouting Wire, the Official Blog of the Scouting Movement. You can subscribe by going to [www.scoutingwire.org](http://www.scoutingwire.org) and scrolling down to the Stay Connected box.



**Question:** Where do I go for information on Internet Charter Renewal?

**Answer:** The Commissioners webpage has all the links for Internet Charter Renewal: <https://www.scouting.org/commissioners/internet-rechartering/>

**Question:** Where do I find some of the commissioner merchandise I have been seeing on other commissioners?

**Answer:** There is a commissioner catalog at <https://www.scoutshop.org/>. Once you arrive at the site, hover over Shop by Scout. On the far right side of the dropdown menu, you will see Commissioner Items in the list. Select Commissioner Items and start shopping!



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Updated October 2020

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