

# THE COMMISSIONER

A PUBLICATION FOR COMMISSIONERS AND PROFESSIONALS



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

*The role of the unit commissioner is to help every unit be successful. Unit success is defined by the unit achieving Journey to Excellence status and demonstrating an improvement in the retention of its members.*

## New! Commissioner Award of Excellence in Unit Service

The national commissioner support team asked a simple question: “How can we really impact commissioner service, in a manner that would improve unit program and increase retention of youth?” The decision was simple: Recognize the volunteers who are providing excellent commissioner service with a knot, and let those commissioners lead by example.



The next step was to put together a team from across the regions with commissioners at different service levels:

Craig Bailey—UC from the Northeast Region

David James—DC from the Central Region

Dwight Jekel—ACC from the Southern Region

Kevin Baker—CC from the Western Region

Doug Ferguson—AC from the Southern Region

Ellie Morrison—National Commissioner Service Recruitment and Retention Chair

None of them knew one another but each accepted the challenge to bring perspective to the project, be open and honest in communication, and timely with comments. They were true to the task and we had some lively discussions. This team worked beautifully together, working through differences of opinion to best serve Scouting. They are hoping to finally meet one another at the annual meeting in May where the knot will be introduced to the commissioner corps.

The result of their work is an insightful, intuitive award that defines excellent unit commissioner service. The new Commissioner Service Award of Excellence was developed as a nationwide effort to engage Scouting volunteers and professional Scouters to work together in focusing on unit retention. Any registered commissioner who is providing direct unit service is eligible to earn the Commissioner Award of Excellence in Unit Service. The knot was introduced by the National Commissioner Service Task Force and approved by the national BSA Awards and Recognition Committee.

*Requirements continues on Page 2*

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# Commissioner Progress Record for the Commissioner Award of Excellence in Unit Service

## Requirements:

Any registered commissioner who is providing direct unit service is eligible to earn the **Commissioner Award of Excellence in Unit Service**, through unit service and a project that results in improved retention of members and on-time unit recharter, over the course of two consecutive years. If a commissioner who is not registered as a unit commissioner wishes to earn this award, they must work with the district commissioner where the unit(s) is/are registered.

Date started: \_\_\_\_\_

Unit type and number: \_\_\_\_\_

Youth retention at last recharter: \_\_\_\_\_ (%)  
(See Journey to Excellence form.)

ADC/DC signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## Technical Skills:

The commissioner shall consistently demonstrate the following:

1. The ability to use UVTS 2.0 to log unit visits
2. The ability to provide UVTS 2.0 visit reports to an ADC or DC

Signature of ADC/DC \_\_\_\_\_

## Participation:

Complete each item below:

1. Be a participant or staff member in **ONE** continuing education event for commissioner service.<sup>1</sup> For example: district, council, area, regional, or national College of Commissioner Science, commissioner conference, Philmont, Sea Base, or Summit training.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

2. The commissioner shall make at least six physical visits to each assigned unit per year. All visits must be logged with UVTS 2.0. Examples: unit meetings, unit activities, leader meetings, and summer camp visitations

3. The commissioner shall make at least six significant contacts (in addition to those made in item 2) for each unit served, by telephone, two-way electronic communication, or in person. These contacts must be logged in UVTS 2.0.

Signature of ADC/DC \_\_\_\_\_

Footnote 1: Participation or staffing in a continuing education event as noted above prior to the start date of this award shall not be applied. Participation or instructing during training sessions as part of regular staff meetings may not be applied.

## Training and Experience:

Complete each item below:

1. Commissioner Basic Training  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Provide rechartering service by holding membership inventories, training verification, and Journey to Excellence<sup>2</sup> progress review meetings. Perform charter presentations for the chartered organizations of the units you serve.

Unit Type and Number	Date of Recharter	Date Charter Presented
P999		
P999		
T999		
T999		
C999		
C999		

Footnote 2: Unit-specific requirements and performance criteria are founded on the BSA's Journey to Excellence guidelines. As changes are incorporated, the council commissioner must scope impacts and adjust expectations as required.

## Performance:

Complete each item below:

**A. Performance Goal:** Through utilization of the annual unit self-assessment tool, identify a specific goal in a specific unit that would result in higher quality unit performance. The goal should target improvement in at least one of the unit self-assessment target areas.

Signature of ADC/DC and the date \_\_\_\_\_

**B. Action Plan:** Provide a written plan to achieve the goal identified in item A above. Have the plan approved by the unit leader, with the unit leader's signature.

Signature of ADC/DC and the date \_\_\_\_\_

## C. Results:

1. **Unit self-assessment** conducted twice a year for two years:

Dates: Year 1: \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_  
Year 2: \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

2. **Unit retention:** On-time rechartering for two consecutive years:

Dates: \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

3. **Youth retention:** Youth retention percentages must show improvement:

Year 1: \_\_\_\_\_% Year 2: \_\_\_\_\_%  
(See the Journey to Excellence form.)

Signature of ADC/DC \_\_\_\_\_

A commissioner may earn this award up to three times while registered as a commissioner at any level. A square knot is available for uniform wear, with added devices awarded for the second and third achievements.



## COMMITTEE ACTION

Upon completion, a commissioner shall provide a copy of this form to the district commissioner, who will then convey this document to the council for verification and final approval.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Council commissioner Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Council Scout executive Date

## Commissioner Progress Record FOR THE



## Commissioner Award of Excellence in Unit Service

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

Council: \_\_\_\_\_

District: \_\_\_\_\_

**BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA**



# New Second Century Commissioner Patches



Unrestricted council, district, and unit commissioner patches are available at local council Scout shops.

*\*Restricted for national, regional, and area commissioners*



## National Commissioner Minute



**Tico Perez**  
National Commissioner

My fellow commissioners,

**New Commissioner Patch:** As we move forward into the next 100 years of Scouting, it is my pleasure to introduce the Second Century Commissioner patch (page 3). This patch will be identical to the 1910–2010 Centennial Commissioner patches in all respects, except the dates will not be included. It is our way to keep the wreath of service alive in the hearts and minds of our dedicated volunteers who provide tremendous ongoing support to units.

**Journey to Excellence:** We have a very important challenge to undertake in our local councils, districts, and units, as we transition from the Centennial Quality Award to the new Journey to Excellence performance recognition award for units. The role of the unit commissioner is critical in helping units achieve their bronze, silver, and gold levels. The UC is a coach, mentor, and guidance counselor. Focus should be placed on assessing where each of their units are on the 13 requirements, developing an agreed upon unit plan to achieve their objectives, schedule biannual unit self-assessments, and reward them for their achievement and performance level. And to insure proper communication, add monthly unit visits and contacts made into the unit visitation tracking system (UVTS 2.0).

**UVTS 2.0:** We have had very positive feedback from the UVTS 2.0 enhancements made several months ago. Whereas there have been hiccups

in accessing UVTS 2.0 for some, we are pleased to say that these issues were not related to technical issues with UVTS; they were, instead, glitches in the master ScoutNET server. Each technical server error that was brought to our attention by calls to the UVTS 2.0 hotline for commissioners at 972-672-4389 was addressed and ultimately fixed.

In other words, UVTS 2.0 works! So do not be afraid to use it. We now have close to 100 percent of councils using UVTS 2.0. This is our future.

Our next biggest focus is for 100 percent of all districts to begin to use UVTS 2.0. To accomplish this, we are calling on all commissioners to begin using UVTS 2.0 if they currently are not—and for those who are, to continue adding unit visits. This can be done by entering visits directly or by submitting written reports to your administrative commissioners. Remember, what we measure we can achieve!



**Volunteer-driven, professionally guided:** Let me say in closing that Scouting would not be here without you—our commissioners. We need you more than ever today, to help youth join our values-based program and help sustain units long term by working together with your professional counterpart and team up for Scouting!

### Congratulations and Thank You

Thank you all for what you do as volunteer commissioners! Congratulations to Scott Sorrels for receiving the Silver Buffalo and Darlene Sprague for receiving the Silver Antelope at our National Annual Meeting, May 27, 2011, in San Diego, California.

## The Next Strategic Steps to Lasting Impact for the Commissioner Corps



**Scott Sorrels**  
National Commissioner  
Service Chairman

When we started the National Commissioner Service Task Force about three years ago, we identified two strategic goals that could be tackled immediately while the task force analyzed other initiatives that should be undertaken. The first goal was to materially increase the number of registered unit commissioners who are available to serve our units. During this period, we have seen as many as 30,000 registered unit commissioners, though we have noted some cyclical effects during the year that we need to smooth out. The second goal was to support a tracking program that encourages and

measures the most important aspect of our job—whether we are actually contacting and supporting our local units. The Unit Visit Tracking System was born and, after some rough spots, UVTS 2.0 was designed and launched last summer. It has proven to be a stable and useful platform. We are seeing the number of registered unit visits increase by huge percentages month-over-month. Bob Coons, our former training chair, worked with the Journey to Excellence Task Force, and we were able to incorporate the goals of increased commissioner numbers and the use of UVTS 2.0 as two of the seventeen components that are measured as part of JTE.

### Commissioner Award of Excellence

This past summer, the task force turned its focus beyond raw numbers and counting unit visits, and asked what it really takes to be an effective unit commissioner and what identifiable steps a unit commissioner should take to almost guarantee an improved unit program and a long-term sustainable unit. A special committee was formed of experienced commissioners and, under the leadership of Recruitment and Retention Chair Ellie Morrison, the committee developed the standards for the new Commissioner Award for Excellent Unit Service, a new recognition knot that will be launched at this annual meeting. We worked carefully with Gary Butler, our assistant Chief Scout Executive, to ensure that the award components support the Journey to Excellence program. As a result, you will see that the quality components are measurable events over a period of up to two years. One particularly brilliant part of the award is the idea of the unit commissioner and the unit leadership identifying together a special project that the unit commissioner can undertake to improve the health of that unit. Because each unit is different, we expect to see many different types of projects that will result in improved quality program. These same projects should also help the commissioner corps reinforce with unit leadership that we are serious about serving the needs of their units.



Special thanks to the award committee members: Ellie Morrison, chair; David James; Dwight Jekel; Doug Ferguson; Craig Bailey; and Kevin Baker.

# The Important Functions of Commissioners

Drawing from many resources, including the *Commissioner Fieldbook for Unit Service*, and the *Administration of Commissioner Service* manual, as well as many, many combined years of experience and training, the team identified a few of the most important functions performed by a commissioner providing unit service:

1. Unit visit and then logging the visits in UVTS 2.0
2. Mentoring/coaching/counseling
3. Continual education
4. Rechartering assistance
5. Effective unit strengthening

Beginning with the unit visit, it became clear that the concept of a visit needed to be defined. The team also believed this award should complement the recently developed Journey to Excellence. The JTE was very clear that a unit should expect at least six visits from a commissioner per year. Previous publications have used terms like monthly and frequently. It was finally agreed that physical visits are important, but meaningful communication was also key. Some very good communication between a unit leader and a commissioner is handled over the phone, over email, and through more tech-savvy methods, such as instant messaging and texting.

Commissioners must embrace as many different forms of communication as is necessary to carry out the duties of mentoring, coaching, and counseling unit leaders.

Commissioners need to be current in their understanding of the BSA programs, policies, and updates. No other volunteer position has as much continuing educational opportunities than the commissioner position. Through Commissioners College, commissioner conferences, and national opportunities such as Philmont Training Center and the training center at Sea Base, commissioners have a lot to learn. A commissioner must participate in some manner in continuing education—above and beyond the monthly training topic that each district commissioner should be providing.

If units did not recharter in a timely manner, there would be no Boy Scouts of America, and commissioners have been involved with rechartering units since the beginning. Part of the charter concept is the very important relationship with the chartered

partners. This award recognizes this relationship.

A commissioner's primary function is to be a "friend to the unit." When people work together on a common goal, relationships are strengthened. An often underutilized tool is the unit self-assessment tool. The self-assessment tool is a two-page worksheet that a unit leader and a unit committee chair use to identify important areas of unit improvement.

Once the worksheet has been filled out, the commissioner will work with the unit and develop a written plan to improve one of the areas identified through the use of the self-assessment tool. How do you measure success? If a unit's youth members are satisfied that they are receiving the best program possible, they will stay on and keep the unit growing strong!

During the process of setting the goals for unit service, the team realized excellent unit service was the key concept—not the individual providing the service. You will notice that this award is targeted to all registered commissioners. This will encourage administrative commissioners to come back to field service, or even to try field service. All commissioners, at any level, at any time, are encouraged to work on the Commissioners Award of Excellence in Unit Service. The only prerequisite is to have completed Commissioner Basic Training.

The award will require dual signatures from the council commissioner and the council Scout executive. In this way, these two key individuals have direct feedback about the many excellent commissioners who are providing unit service in the council. As for insignia, the successful recipient will be able to purchase a square knot for uniform wear, and subsequent earnings of the award the recipient will be allowed to pin on a commissioner device onto the knot. The award will take up to two years to earn, and a commissioner may earn the award up to three times. Although there is a time component to the tasks, there is no tenure requirement. This means the time spent earning the award may actually be simultaneously applied to other commissioner awards, such as the Commissioner Arrowhead Honor and Commissioner's Key.



**Ellie Morrison**  
*National Commissioner  
Service Recruitment and  
Retention Chair*



*Submitted by Craig Bailey.*

## Identifying Prospective Unit Commissioners

### IDENTIFYING PROSPECTIVE UNIT COMMISSIONERS

- A knowledgeable Scouter
- A seasoned volunteer with the time available to invest in a new unit
- An enthusiastic mentor who can keep the new unit leaders energized about their role in the program
- A Scouter neighbor in the community who is accessible to the unit
- Order of the Arrow members 21 or older
- Eagle Scouts 21 or older
- Former camp staff members
- Educators
- Former Scouts/Venturers
- Parents of Scouts with Scouting backgrounds
- Service club members, e.g., Jaycees and Optimist Club members
- Retirees
- Retired professional Scouters
- Military personnel
- Coaches
- College alumni
- Others





## UNIT VISIT TRACKING SYSTEM 2.0 SUPPORT

How can I get additional support and help for Unit Visit Tracking System 2.0?

This special UVTS 2.0 hotline for commissioners is: Phone: 972-672-4389

Hours: The operator is on-call to answer questions Monday through Saturday from 8 a.m.–10 p.m.

(If there is no answer, leave a message and a support person will call you back.)

- For volunteers who have questions on MyScouting access or member ID questions, please send an email to

MyScouting@scouting.org with your user name, email address, contact information, council name and headquarters city, and your question. The MyScouting sign-in also includes an FAQ about MyScouting accounts.

## New Roundtable Study Committee

Our next significant undertaking is to study the effectiveness of roundtables at the Cub Scout, Boy Scout, and Venturing levels. We have appointed a new roundtable chair as part of the task force: Dan Maxfield, a former area commissioner from California. We have charged Dan with gathering a group of roundtable volunteers who will undertake a top to bottom analysis of what we do well and what does not work in our roundtable program. We have encouraged Dan's group to bring fresh ideas to the table, use technology as appropriate, and develop a platform that will make for effective roundtables as we enter our second century of service. If you are interested in serving on this group, please send Dan Maxfield an email at dmaxfil@yahoo.com.

"The code of the knight is still the code of the gentleman today."

Baden-Powell



**Bob Coons**  
*Former National Commissioner Service Training Chair*

## National Commissioner Support Chair Changes

As you will see elsewhere in this newsletter, our Training Chair "Wisconsin" Bob Coons is moving on to other Scouting deeds. Bob Coons is the father of UVTS and the creator of the new *Council Commissioner Manual*. He also wrote the first syllabus for the Philmont Training Center "Council Commissioner" course. He has made a significant contribution to the commissioner corps, and we will miss him. Tim Acree, our resources chair, has agreed to transition to the training chair position. We know he is passionate about training, and both Bob and Tim were instrumental in our rework of many of the national commissioner training courses at Philmont Training Center and elsewhere. We are pleased to welcome two new national support chairs to the task force: Dan Maxfield from the Western Region, an outgoing area commissioner, who will serve in the newly created roundtable chair position, and Darlene Sprague, from the Northeast Region and also an outgoing area commissioner, who will serve in the resources chair position. Ellie Morrison will continue her extraordinary service as recruitment and retention chair. Their email addresses are listed in the contact box on the back page of the newsletter. Please extend your congratulations on their appointments.



# Tim Acree Transitions from Resources Chair to Training Chair



**Tim Acree**  
National Commissioner  
Service Training Chair

Since the last newsletter, Tim worked on updating the commissioner manuals to reflect the new Journey to Excellence quality program and to create new covers for the commissioner manuals. The new cover will make the commissioner manuals distinctive and easily recognizable as commissioner literature. The new covers have not yet been released. However, most of the references to the previous quality program have been already updated in the manuals. The *Commissioner Fieldbook for Unit Service* was reviewed, and a number of updates and changes were submitted. Tim has also been very active investigating email distribution systems for the commissioner staff.

With the advent of Bob Coons' resignation as training chair, Tim Acree has agreed to transition from the resources chair to training chair. Tim and Bob have worked hand in hand during the past several years as

their roles are so intertwined. Bob has made contributions to the resources area by authoring the *Council Commissioner Manual* and managing the changes and implementation of UVTS 2.0. Tim has helped Bob with training by chairing training at Philmont for the past three years when Bob was unable to attend. Tim also oversaw the introduction of two new courses and the rewrite of two courses for Philmont last year. Tim has a passion for training and plans to enhance and update commissioner training during his tenure. As a training chair, Tim will initially be focused on creating a Fast Start training for council commissioners and district commissioners. He will also work with Dan Maxfield to create "Fast Start" training for roundtable commissioners. In addition, Tim worked with Ellie Morrison's recruiting and retention team to create training for the new Commissioner Award of Excellence in Unit Service square knot. Tim will again chair the commissioner courses during week two at Philmont.



## Darlene Sprague



**Darlene Sprague**  
New National Commissioner  
Service Resources Chair

Darlene has been a long-time active volunteer in Cub Scouting, Boy Scouting, and district-, council-, area-, regional-, and national-level positions. She knows commissioner service well. She served as district training chair, Cub Scout roundtable training staff, District Commissioner (six years), and council commissioner (four years) in the Greater Niagara Frontier Council located in Buffalo, New York. She had also served more recently as Area 3 commissioner (three years) for the Northeast Region.

She is Wood Badge-trained and has earned many volunteer recognitions: the Cub Scouter Award, Webelos Den Leader Award, Cub Scouter of the Year, District Award of Merit, Commissioner of the Year, Silver Beaver, Commissioner's Key, Commissioner Arrowhead Honor, Council Commissioner's Award, Doctor of Commissioner Science and, in May 2011, will be awarded the Silver Antelope from the Northeast Region.

Darlene will take on the responsibility of serving on the national commissioner service team as the new resources chair replacing Tim Acree, who will serve as the new training chair. Acree is replacing Bob Coons, who will be retiring from commissioner service and serving in his local council.

## Resources Chair POSITION DESCRIPTION

- Works with the national commissioner service chair to provide resources support for commissioner service operations in the Northeast, Central, Southern, and Western regions.
- Oversees the national commissioner website: [www.scouting.org/commissioners](http://www.scouting.org/commissioners), to insure all information is accurate and current. Also, works closely with the national commissioner service chair

and the national commissioner service training chair, along with the regional and area commissioners to support their efforts in the local council by online commissioner resources and materials.

- Oversees national UVTS 2.0 system to insure proper communications and commissioner service/support/ feedback are being delivered to and from the field. Tracks new enhancements and progress. Works closely with the UVTS 2.0 help desk for commissioners, IDG specialist, and staff adviser in solving UVTS 2.0 issues.
- Attends National Commissioner Task Force meetings in February, May, and November.
- Attends council Colleges of Commissioner Science-related seminars, electives, presentations, and events, when needed.
- Supports local councils by working together with the National Commissioner Service Task Force and Program Impact Department to review and develop new commissioner support materials and literature.
- Attends Program Impact Department Leadership Development Task Force national training planning meetings.
- Coordinates support materials for commissioner courses at Philmont Scout Ranch, Florida Sea Base, and the Center for Professional Development. Develops training and revises and updates commissioner syllabi and course content working with the national commissioner service training chair.
- Secures all articles for *The Commissioner* newsletter working with the national commissioner service team for February, May and October.
- Supports areas and local councils by identifying, securing, distributing, and sharing best methods.
- Works with the national commissioner service training chair and the commissioner service recruitment and retention chair to develop commissioner resources and recruitment materials, electronic resources, and new publications to support their efforts.
- Works closely with the staff adviser for commissioner service on the national BSA Community Alliances Team in the Membership Impact Department.





# Daniel B. Maxfield



**Daniel B. Maxfield**  
*National Commissioner  
Service Roundtable Chair*

Dan Maxfield was a Life Scout as a youth and has been a long time volunteer Scouter with 55 years of tenure in the Scouting program. He has three Eagle Scout sons: two are Brotherhood members of the OA and one is a Vigil member of the OA. His father and uncle are Eagle Scouts, and his grandfather was a council vice president and unit leader.

Dan is Wood Badge-trained and has served in Cub Scouting, Boy Scouting, Exploring, and several multiple positions on the district and council.

He is a Vigil member of the Order of the Arrow and has served as lodge adviser and section adviser, and he has attended many Order of the Arrow conferences.

He served 10 years as a council commissioner, Area 3 commissioner (three years) in the Western Region.

He served on staff for eight national jamborees, a Wood Badge course director, and a member of the National BSA Advancement, Training, Camping School/Program Committee.

Some of his multiple recognitions include, to name a few, the District Award of Merit, Scouter's Key, Cubmaster Award, Silver Beaver, and Silver Antelope.

## National Commissioner Service Roundtable Chair (New Position)

### POSITION DESCRIPTION

- Works with the national commissioner service chair to provide roundtable support of commissioner service operations in the Northeast, Central, Southern, and Western regions.

- Oversees the roundtable section of the commissioner website, working closely with the national commissioner service chair and the national commissioner service resources chair, along with the regional and area commissioners, to support their efforts in the local council by providing online roundtable resources and materials.
- Attends National Commissioner Task Force meetings in February, May, and November.
- Attends council Colleges of Commissioner Science-related seminars, electives, presentations, and events, when needed.
- Supports local councils by working together with the National Commissioner Service Task Force and the Program Impact Department to develop roundtable program helps, syllabi, and presentations.
- Attends the Program Impact Department Task Force roundtable program planning meetings.
- Conducts a national roundtable study by evaluating the current effectiveness of roundtables; recommends appropriate changes; designs a strategic plan to implement these changes; and provides follow-up as necessary to measure our success.
- Coordinates roundtable commissioner courses at Philmont Scout Ranch, Florida Sea Base, and the Center for Professional Development. Develops training, revise and update roundtable commissioner syllabi and course content working with the national commissioner service training chair.
- Secures roundtable articles for *The Commissioner* newsletter working with the national commissioner service resources chair.
- Supports local council roundtables by identifying, securing, distributing, and sharing best roundtable methods.
- Works with the national commissioner service training chair and the commissioner service recruitment and retention chair to develop commissioner roundtable resource training and recruitment materials, electronic resources, and new publications to support their efforts.
- Works closely with the staff adviser for commissioner service on the national BSA Community Alliances Team in the Membership Impact Department.



## Commissioner Task Force Organizes Roundtable Study Project

**Roundtable**—To those not involved in roundtables, the term may sound like a meeting of medieval knights. At the BSA, we know it has historically been a key vehicle through which unit leaders receive thematic and program information and updates on coming district and council events. Roundtables have been traditionally well attended and, as a side benefit, have allowed leaders to share ideas and assist one another in solving problems. Scouters have thus enjoyed a community of friends and support.

The question now is: What should roundtables be in the next century of the Boy Scouts of America? How can we enhance their effectiveness? How can we use the national support structure to better support roundtable efforts? How can we use technology to support our roundtable leadership?

During this study, we will undertake an evaluation of the current effectiveness of roundtables, recommend appropriate changes, design a strategic plan to implement those changes, and follow-up as necessary to measure our success. To this end, a team of Scouters from around the country is being formed to lead this effort. Ideas from a wide variety of places and sources will be needed. If you are passionate about roundtables and you want to participate in this effort, please let us know of your interest. Keep an eye out in the next few months for an opportunity to participate in surveys, interviews, and visits to see best practices. We want your thoughts and ideas. Dan Maxfield, our new roundtable chair, can be reached at [dmaxfil@yahoo.com](mailto:dmaxfil@yahoo.com).





## Regional Commissioners



**Peter P. Casey**  
Northeast Region  
[peterpc@comcast.net](mailto:peterpc@comcast.net)



**Jan T. Perkins**  
Western Region  
[jperkins@pmelaw.com](mailto:jperkins@pmelaw.com)



**Lt. Col. Reid A. Christopherson**  
Central Region (New)  
[Reid.christopherson@ang.af.mil](mailto:Reid.christopherson@ang.af.mil)



**Dr. John W. Lea IV**  
Southern Region (New)  
[jlea@csapc.net](mailto:jlea@csapc.net)



**Joe Domino**  
Former Southern  
Region Commissioner



**Brian Williams**  
Former Central  
Region Commissioner

Special thanks to Joe Domino and Brian Williams for their dedicated service as regional commissioners.

## Welcome, Dr. John W. Lea IV and Lt. Col. Reid A. Christopherson

**John W. Lea IV, M.D.**, practices cardiac surgery at St. Thomas Hospital in Nashville, Tennessee. He received the United Methodist God and Service Award for his outstanding service to youth through his involvement with the Middle Tennessee Council. John and Ellen have two Eagle Scout sons: William and Graham.

John served as Webelos den leader, assistant Scoutmaster, advancement chair and unit commissioner, council activities chair, council advancement chair, and council commissioner.

He has been recognized with the Doctor of Commissioner Science and the Pathfinder, Distinguished Commissioner, Silver Beaver, and Silver Antelope awards. He is Wood Badge-trained, a James E. West District Award of Merit recipient, and a James E. West Fellow. Since 1995 John has been a member of the Middle Tennessee Council Executive Board. He chaired the Medical Services for the Council Jamboree, served as the chair for the Program Task Force Long-Range Strategic Plan Committee, and cochaired the Middle Tennessee Council 2004–2008 Long-Range Strategic Plan. John will be serving in his new role as the Southern Region commissioner.

**Lieutenant Colonel Reid A. Christopherson** is the executive officer of the 114th Fighter Wing at the South Dakota Air National Guard in Sioux Falls. Born and raised in Sioux Falls, he received his bachelor's and master's of science degrees from South Dakota State University.

Lieutenant Colonel Reid A. Christopherson is an Eagle Scout with a Bronze Palm and a member of NESA. He has served in many volunteer positions in Scouting, such as the Sioux Council president and council commissioner, district commissioner, unit commissioner, Boy Scout roundtable staff, Scoutmaster, Webelos Scout leader, assistant Cubmaster, and assistant Exploring adviser. He has attended many national and world Jamborees, serving in various leadership positions. He has received many high-level BSA awards, such as the Arrowhead Honor, the Distinguished Commissioner, District Award of Merit, and Silver Beaver and Silver Antelope awards. Reid is an OA Vigil member and is still active in Wood Badge, having served as course director.

Reid is also very active in the National Guard, as well as in his church and community, and has received various awards of service.

His wife Ruth is also a lieutenant colonel in the South Dakota Air National Guard and is employed full-time with Citibank. They have two children.

Reid will be serving in his new role as the Central Region commissioner.

# Venturing Adopts Organizational Procedures

Many have requested that the BSA provide some structure and directives for the organization of Venturing officer's associations at all levels. The VOA is a group of youth officers on a district, council, area, or region tier that promotes membership, resource sharing, and events for Venturing in their territories. The National Youth Cabinet, supported by the Program Impact department and the Youth Development team, provides national and regional leadership to Venturing and the VOA. The National Youth Cabinet has created a minimum set of standards for operating as a Venturing officers' association (VOA), resulting in the Venturing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

The hallmarks of the Venturing SOPs, which can be found on the [www.scouting.org](http://www.scouting.org), include the following:

- The mission of the National Venturing Cabinet and region, area, council, and district VOAs
- The selection process for youth president at the national, region, area, council, and district tiers
- The appointment process for youth vice presidents at the national, region, area, council, and district tiers
- Organizational diagrams of the structure of positions and functions for regions/areas and councils/districts
- Job profiles for each position for youth officers and adult advisers
- A glossary describing the process, positions, and key terms

These are minimum recommended standards for councils, and they can be further enhanced by councils as appropriate given service demographics and local requirements. The National Youth Cabinet and the area leadership are available to assist in the organization of VOAs. Their contact information can be obtained by contacting the Youth Development Team Administrative Assistant Angela Elliott at 972-580-2261 or [angela.elliott@scouting.org](mailto:angela.elliott@scouting.org).

## Eligibility Requirements for Venturing Modified

The National Executive Board approved a resolution in 2010 to change the eligibility requirements for Venturing to ensure consistency among Venturing, high-adventure bases, and other core programs. Previously, the age and grade eligibility requirement for participation in the Venturing program was 14 years of age and the completion of the eighth grade. Effective May 1, 2010, the minimum age requirement was changed to 14 years of age, or 13 years of age and completion of the eighth grade. The maximum age for participation remains under 21 years of age. For more information, read the frequently asked questions below.

Q. Does this impact Sea Scouts?

A. Sea Scouts is part of the Venturing program. Therefore, the revised eligibility requirements apply to Sea Scouting.

Q. Does this impact Exploring?

A. No, this change only applies to the Venturing program.

Q. Does this change affect high-adventure bases?

A. No, the age/grade requirements are now in alignment with the high-adventure bases. Specifically, regarding our sea bases, the PADI requirements are:

- Diver must be between the ages of 12 and 14.
- The depth is a maximum 18 meters/60 feet for junior open water divers and a maximum of 21 meters/70 feet for continuing education.
- After certification: Youth divers must dive with an adult certified diver.
- Responsibility and risk: The parent or guardian and the child sign administrative forms.

Q. What effect will this change have on the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints?

A. This change to age/grade eligibility will have no effect on The Church's current application of the Venturing program.







## Commissioner Service and Venturing

We wanted to share a message with each of you regarding Venturing. We have heard that understanding and servicing Venturing crews may be challenging from a commissioner's perspective. Perhaps you are aware and perhaps not, Venturing is a hobby- and outdoor-centered program that is uniquely flexible in its programming. Just like Cub Scouting and Boy Scouting, Venturing follows the three aims of Scouting and has methods of delivery.

The aims of the BSA are to build character, develop citizenship, and foster personal fitness. The Venturing methods listed below have been carefully designed to achieve the aims of the BSA and meet the needs of young adults.

- **Adult association.** The youth officers lead the crew. The officers and activity chairs work closely with adult advisers and other adult leaders in a spirit of partnership. The adults serve in a "shadow" leader capacity.
- **Leadership.** All Venturers are given opportunities to learn and apply proven leadership skills. A Venturing crew is led by elected crew officers. The Venturing Leadership Skills Course is designed for all Venturers and helps them learn to teach in an active way to effectively lead their crews.
- **Recognition.** Recognition comes through the Venturing advancement program and through the acknowledgement of a youth's competence and ability by peers and adults.
- **Ideals.** Venturers are expected to know and live by the Venturing Oath and Venturing Code. They promise to be faithful in religious duties, treasure their American heritage, and to help others and to seek truth and fairness.

- **Group activities.** Venturing activities are interdependent group experiences in which success is dependent on the cooperation of all. Learning by doing in a group setting provides opportunities for developing new skills.
- **High adventure.** Venturing's emphasis on high adventure helps provide team building opportunities, new meaningful experiences, practical leadership application, and life-long memories for young adults.
- **Teaching others.** All of the Venturing awards require Venturers to teach to others what they have learned. When they teach others often, Venturers are better able to retain the skill or knowledge they taught, they gain confidence in their ability to speak and relate to others, and they acquire skills that can benefit them for the rest of their lives in their hobbies or occupations.

When making visitations to crew meetings, commissioners should be looking for a combination of methods that are being used to effectively operate crew meetings. Crews should be advised by adults and led by youth, as this design affords the development of leadership skills. There are typically at least four youth officers who organize and lead various crew activities. Occasionally Venturing meetings have speakers, or referred to in Venturing as consultants, who are requested by these youth leaders to come and present a hobby or an outdoor topic to the crew. Other meeting formats may include general planning sessions, elections, actual program-related events, or perhaps a critique/reflection of a recent event or activity. Commissioner service of Venturing crews is

still similar to that of service of a pack or troop. You will still be developing relationships with volunteers and, more specifically, youth leaders, offering the services of the district and council, and witnessing programs in action. The keys to the program lie within the methods. If you look for telltale signs of the methods we have outlined above and ensure that the youth leadership method is being applied, then you will likely witness a successful operation. Youth should plan, conduct, and evaluate their programs. Adults are there to provide support and guide them, keeping the youth from making decisions that could negatively affect their health and welfare. The key to a crew's success is the level of activity taking place during the meetings to ensure the future active participation of its youth.

We strongly encourage you to review the website at [www.scouting.org/venturing](http://www.scouting.org/venturing) and secure a copy of the *Venturing Leader Manual*, which outlines Venturing operations, from your local Scout store. These tools will help to provide you a stronger understanding of Venturing operations and how to interact in a more functional manner with the crews with which you work.

On the website, there are biographies of the national youth leadership, including youth Presidents from each region. These youth leaders also have a wealth of contact information that you can use when assisting councils and crews. Thank you for all you do in support of the Venturing programs in your local council.

# The Venturing Commissioner

## Venturing Forum/Varsity Huddle/Older Scout Roundtable

One of the best ways to strengthen the units with older youth in your district is to hold a Venturing forum, Varsity huddle, and an older Scout roundtable. Now hold on, you might say, where are you going to find the manpower to staff all three programs? The answer is to simply combine all programs into one roundtable. All three programs have a lot in common as they serve not only the same age groups but also many of the same interests. What could be better than sharing great high-adventure consultants with all of the units in your district?

The best resource for this program is probably the *Venturing Monthly Program Forum*, (No. 32356), or, if you can find it, the *Varsity Huddle Guide*. The word forum was adopted to take away some of the confusion for new Venturing leaders as it is a more descriptive term for what is known in Scouting as roundtable. The Varsity program calls it a huddle, but it is essentially the same thing and even follows a similar format. Whatever you call it, this meeting is an opportunity for leaders not only to learn information on a new subject but also to share their experiences. Allowing leaders to be interactive is the key to a good roundtable.

Although specifically designed for the Venturing program, the Venturing forum format is easily adapted to cover everyone's needs. In addition to the basic opening and closing, every meeting consists of three core parts: a unit topic, a challenge activity, and the program feature. The unit topic provides training on subjects that are unique to Scouting, such as how to fill out a trip plan, better use parental help, or understand specific advancement issues. This portion of the meeting can split into subgroups to meet the specific needs of each program. While Varsity coaches can talk about the Denali Award, Venturing leaders can discuss the bronze award. The key is to focus on the topics and questions that your unit needs, but most of all, make sure the unit topic only takes up no more than fifteen minutes.

Because even adults can get bored when being lectured to, take to the time to do a challenge activity. Sometimes known as low COPE



games, most older youth enjoy being challenged with a physical activity that also allows them to solve a challenge. By having a new game each month, your leaders will soon have many games that can be shared with their older youth. Both the *Venturing Forum Guide* and *Varsity Huddle Guide* have many such challenges from which to choose. Try to choose a game for the roundtable that can be completed in five to ten minutes as it is important to leave the majority of the time for the most important part of your meeting: the program feature.

The key to a great forum/huddle/roundtable is an exciting, interactive program feature. Find out what your units want to learn and then bring in an expert consultant that will let your leaders learn in a hands-on manner. If geocaching is the topic of interest, have your experts explain briefly how a GPS works and send the leaders outside to find pre-hidden caches. For fly-fishing, make sure leaders get a chance to practice casting out in the parking lot. Think about what would be a great meeting for older youth and then model that meeting for the leaders. Sometimes this might mean going beyond the bounds of your usual meeting place. If you want to cover scuba diving, go to a pool. Need to experience rock climbing? Take your leaders to a climbing gym.

Even planning can be a fun experience. You should designate one meeting a year so that units can choose which high-adventure topics they would like covered. This planning meeting does not have to be done in a meeting room. Consider going on a short hike in the park and then have everyone pull up a rock. If you want to be extra adventurous, get a bunch of canoes, paddle out to the middle of the lake, and hold your planning meeting there. As a bonus, your unit topic that day can be Safety Afloat.

Regardless of what you want to call it, having a roundtable meeting that serves your Venturing crews, Varsity teams, and older Scout patrols will help provide a fun and exciting program for the older youth in your district.





# The Commissioner's Role in Supporting Journey to Excellence





For more information on the Journey to Excellence program, visit [www.scouting.org/commissioners](http://www.scouting.org/commissioners), and click on Journey to Excellence.

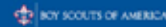


THE COMMISSIONER'S ROLE IN  
SUPPORTING THE UNIT  
PERFORMANCE RECOGNITION PROGRAM



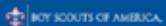
## The Role of a Commissioner in Journey to Excellence

- You're not an umpire 
- You're not a judge or the police 
- You are a friend, a mentor, and a coach 
- And you might help a bit with score-keeping 



## Commissioner Support for Journey to Excellence

1. Share the JTE form with each of your units during 2011 rechartering. Make it part of their planning.
2. Several times during the year during visits or contacts, check on how they are doing. Record the results in the Unit Visit Tracking System (UVTS 2.0).
3. Help unit leadership complete the form during 2011/2012 rechartering. Certify their performance in how well they did. Afterward, share and discuss the 2012 Journey to Excellence standards.
4. Be sure each unit gets its earned recognition items. Present unit recognition publicly.



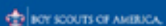
## Journey to Excellence Implementation Timing

2010 Recharter Month											
Oct			Nov			Dec			These units will earn the 2010 Centennial Quality Award		
2011 Recharter Month											
Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
These units have earned the 2010 Centennial Quality Award									These units will earn the 2011 Journey to Excellence Award		
2012 Recharter Month											
Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
These units will earn the 2011 Journey to Excellence Award									These units will earn the 2012 Journey to Excellence Award		
2013 Recharter Month											
Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
These units will earn the 2012 Journey to Excellence Award									These units will earn the 2013 Journey to Excellence Award		
2014 Recharter Month											
Jan			Feb			Mar			Apr		
These units will earn the 2013 Journey to Excellence Award											



## Journey to Excellence Standards for Districts and Councils

- Besides unit standards, there are also Journey to Excellence standards for districts and councils
- There are specific standards for commissioner service in the district and council
- Quality commissioner service helps your district and council earn **gold**, **silver**, or **bronze** recognition



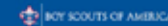
## The District Standard for Commissioners

Unit service: Unit visits are being made and entered into the Unit Visit Tracking System 2.0

**Bronze:** Six commissioner visits/contacts to 25 percent of units and logged into UVTS 2.0–50 pts.

**Silver:** Six commissioner visits/contacts to 35 percent of units and logged into UVTS 2.0–100 pts.

**Gold:** Six commissioner visits/contacts to 50 percent of units and logged into UVTS 2.0–200 pts.



## The Council Standard for Commissioners

Commissioner service: Increase the number of registered commissioners over the prior year

**Bronze:** Commissioner-to-unit ratio of 1:8 or a 5 percent increase in the number of commissioners over the prior year–25 pts.

**Silver:** Commissioner-to-unit ratio of 1:4 or a 7.5 percent increase in the number of commissioners over the prior year–50 pts.

**Gold:** Commissioner-to-unit ratio of 1:3 or 10 percent increase in the number of commissioners over the prior year–100 pts.



## Commissioners and the Implementation of Scouting's Journey to Excellence

- Measuring continuous improvement
- Recognizing and publicizing outstanding performance
- Identifying potential problems to be addressed and corrected
- Encouraging mutual assistance and support
- Supporting the local council's balanced scorecard
- Building better Scouting for more Scouts
- For information on Journey to Excellence, visit [www.Scouting.org/Volunteer](http://www.Scouting.org/Volunteer). Click on Scouting's Journey to Excellence under Quicklinks.
- For questions or info, please email [jte@Scouting.org](mailto:jte@Scouting.org).



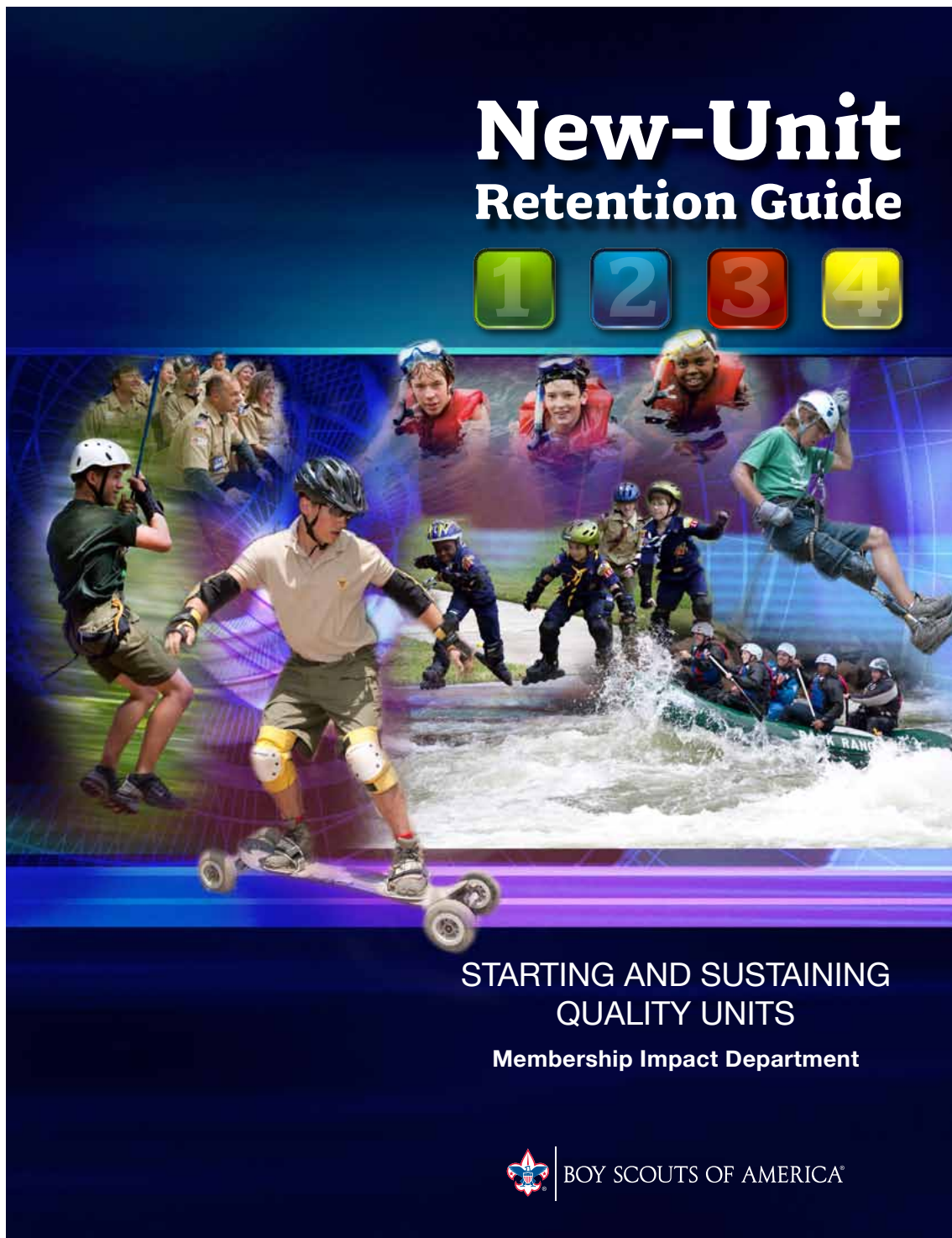
# Launch of New Unit Sustainability Pilot Project

One of the successful best methods we identified in Boy Scout councils around America is the assignment of a single new unit commissioner to each new unit for a period of no less than two recharter cycles, as a means of ensuring that each new unit receives the type of specialized commissioner support that is critical in the early years. This concept was now been incorporated in the new Unit Membership Sustainability Plan and is being launched at this annual

meeting as part of a large pilot program. We are confident that this new unit commissioner concept will break the cycle where we lose more than two-thirds of new units before their second recharter period. The task force is pleased to support the efforts of the volunteers who are taking on the membership roles in regions, areas, and councils, and we look forward to continuing to work with the New Unit Sustainability Task Force to move this important project to fruition.

## New-Unit Retention Guide

The new-unit retention plan is being introduced at the National Annual Meeting in May 2011.





## Unit Self-Assessments: One of the Roles of the Commissioner in the New-Unit Retention Plan

According to BSA membership validation procedure No. 7 for local councils, the unit commissioner and the district executive must conduct unit self-assessments twice a year. Once completed, the assessments are to be submitted to the council registrar and placed in the unit's file.

## Guidelines for Unit Self-Assessment and Action Planning Meeting

(To Be Conducted Semiannually)

**Present at Meeting:** Unit Key 3 (Unit Leader, Unit Committee Chair, Chartered Organization Representative), Unit Commissioner, and District Executive

**Purpose of meeting (Use as the agenda for the meeting.):**

- To evaluate the unit's progress toward achieving the Journey to Excellence Performance Recognition Award
- To review the unit's goals, successes, and vision for the coming year, including a succession plan for future unit leadership
- To identify any areas of improvement—leadership, program, membership, youth and unit retention
- To determine any specific actions needed to be taken to assist with unit improvements and determine who will follow up on those actions
- To schedule any necessary follow-up to monitor progress

**When to conduct meeting (semiannually):**

- After the unit commissioner has visited the unit for the first time and six months prior to the annual charter renewal
- To review strengths and areas of improvement to help provide direction for needed support
- As needed when a problem arises
- When unit leadership changes

**How should the arrangements for this meeting be made?**

- The unit commissioner speaks to the unit leader during the first unit visit to schedule the meeting date, time, and location.
- The dialog should include:
  - Approaching the unit leader after the meeting and requesting that a second meeting be set up with the unit leader, the unit committee chair, and the chartered organization representative
  - Setting the meeting, preferably at the leader's or the chair's home
  - Asking them to complete the unit self-assessment form prior to the meeting
  - Letting them know the visit will include a discussion of the self-assessment form and how the goals and vision of their unit's program can be supported

**Why only the unit leader, unit chair, chartered organization representative, unit commissioner, and district executive?**

- It provides a small group to openly analyze the program, their unit's needs, and steps to be taken to help resolve any issues.
- It helps open a dialog between the unit and the district. Once they meet and determine what needs to be done, others can be involved in helping determine in which direction to go and any potential improvements that can be identified.

**What preparation should be made prior to the action planning meeting?**

- Review the statistics of the unit available from the local council and the district team, especially looking at:
  - JTE Unit status: Bronze, Silver, Gold
  - Outdoor program participation
  - Advancement reports
  - Trained leadership status
  - Youth Protection training
  - Participation in district and council events
  - Roundtable attendance
- Complete the unit self-assessment form after the visit to analyze observations and review the statistics gathered from the council/district prior to the action planning meeting. (The self-assessment form is designed to take the place of the commissioner worksheet previously used by commissioners.)

# Summer 2011 Philmont Training Center Courses Offered in Support of Quality Commissioner Service

Register at [www.myscouting.org](http://www.myscouting.org) under Event Registration in the Events tab.  
For more information, to [www.philmonttrainingcenter.org](http://www.philmonttrainingcenter.org),  
e-mail us at [trainingcenter@philmontscoutranch.org](mailto:trainingcenter@philmontscoutranch.org), or call us at 575-376-2281.

## *How to Conduct a College of Commissioner Science*

This is a special course for future council “deans” of Colleges of Commissioner Science. The first three days of the course will be spent with new material on how to develop, market, and present the training needed for your council commissioners at a College of Commissioner Science. On the final class day, course participants will actually run a College of Commissioner Science at the Philmont Training Center for participants from other commissioner courses. They will be able to work on their bachelor’s, master’s, or doctorate degrees in Commissioner Science. **June 12–18**

## *Council Commissioners*

This course covers the roles and responsibilities of council commissioners and assistant council commissioners. It will be taught by capable instructors with Commissioner Service experience from local councils. They developed materials and publications over the past years for council commissioners. Be among the first to be formally trained as council commissioners or assistant council commissioners. Current council commissioners will be given priority registration. **June 12–18**

## *Effective Leadership of Commissioner Service*

A conference for experienced commissioners seeking more insights to help units deliver a quality program to youth. Learn more about the College of Commissioner Science program, advanced strategies for quality unit service, implementation of a strong commissioner’s program in your district or council, strategic planning objectives, and other topics. **June 12–18**

## *The Unit Commissioner—Supporting Unit Needs*

For unit commissioners prepared to set a positive example in quality service to chartered organizations and Scouting units. Features effective monthly unit visits, unit self-assessment and action planning, coaching skills, charter renewal, annual service plan, commissioner priorities, unit problem-solving, leader development, the National Centennial Quality Unit Award program, and commissioner lifesaving techniques. **June 12–18**

## *Cub Scout and Boy Scout Roundtables and Venturing Forums*

When you think you know all you need to know to conduct high-quality Cub Scout and Boy Scout roundtables and Venturing forums, it is time to attend this conference. The program is built around a forum of experienced roundtable commissioners who address roundtable ideas and lead discussions about problem-solving techniques. **July 17–23**

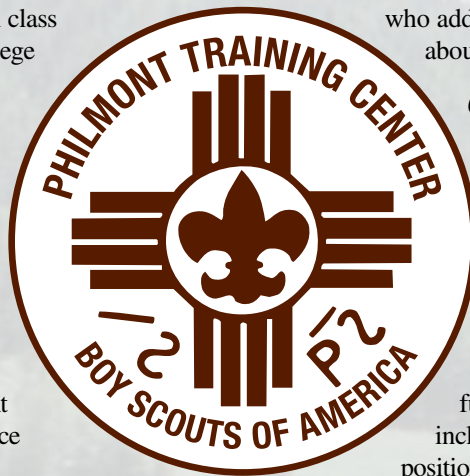
## *Council Key 3*

A great team-building experience for council presidents, council commissioners, and Scout executives! Topics include board management, building effective districts, quality program, membership growth, volunteer/professional relationships, strategic planning, council and district operations, commissioner service, endowment, council fund-raising, and asset management. The week includes plenty of time for breakout sessions by position. Participants are encouraged to attend as a council Key 3 team. **June 12–18**

## *District Key 3—Key Leadership for the Future*

A great team-building opportunity for district chair, district commissioner, and district executive teams. This course covers the role of the district Key 3 and how they work together to build and operate a successful district. It includes plenty of idea-sharing and problem-solving time, and explores successful district operation techniques, recruiting district volunteers, and other topics of interest. Each Key 3 will develop an action plan. A scholarship is available for district executives attending this conference with both their district chair and district commissioner. Participants are encouraged to attend as a district Key 3 team. **June 12–18, July 31–August 6**

*Note: During Week 2, commissioner class attendees will have a chance to participate at the end of the week in an actual Commissioners College.*



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# The Sea Scout Program and the Role of the Commissioner

## WORKING WITH SEA SCOUT SHIPS



Serving as a commissioner for a Sea Scout ship is very little different from working with Venturing crews, Boy Scout troops, Varsity teams, or Cub Scout packs. The core function of the commissioner being a friend of the unit remains

the same. With minor modifications, the commissioner worksheet for crews may be used for ships.

The problems ships encounter are usually human problems, and the solutions are the same as those applied to the same human problems in other Scouting units. A person who is not an expert sailor can still tell if the youth are learning, having fun, and managing their own programs, which are key aims of the Sea Scout program. There is a separate Journey to Excellence worksheet for ships, because some of the program elements and training requirements are slightly different from crew program elements and requirements.

## WHAT TRAINING SHOULD A COMMISSIONER WHO IS WORKING WITH A SEA SCOUT SHIP HAVE?

The basic training requirements for all Sea Scout adult leaders includes: This is Scouting, Venture Leader Youth Protection Training, and Sea Scout Adult Leader Basic Training.

It is recommended that a new Sea Scout commissioner take Sea Scout Adult Leader Basic Training as soon as possible. It is as important, or perhaps even more so, than current basic training in the other Scouting programs, because Sea Scouts is often not in the background experience of new commissioners. The course will introduce them to the few unique challenges, the language, and the many commonalities with other Scouting units. It reemphasizes planning and using resources, and introduces the Sea Scout advancement plan.



To better understand the program and to get to know other leaders, Sea Scout leaders are encouraged to attend a weekend Seabadge course to learn more about the structure of the Sea Scout program and how a ship operates. Seabadge presents the

overall aims and methods of Sea Scouting and how they relate to the purposes of Scouting. The course quickly moves into problem-solving and developing the interpersonal skills necessary for good teaming. This is followed by a study of key issues facing our youth and how we can mentor and counsel them while we help them develop the leadership skills of goal setting, planning, communication, and servant leadership. The course finishes with a review of skills vital to adult leader maintenance such as delegation and networking. Various team exercises follow with each providing the opportunity to demonstrate what is gained from the previous sessions. These exercises are interspersed with sessions that provide additional tools and techniques. If a commissioner is interested in

learning more about on-the-water navigation used by Sea Scouts, Seabadge Underway is offered. It is the mission of this course to provide basic training to prepare Sea Scout adult leaders to teach and manage their ships for the safe operation of a Sea Scout vessel underway in moderate conditions. The adult unit leader (skipper) may or may not be the vessel operator. Many experienced small vessel skippers, including U.S. Coast Guard-licensed vessel operators, are untrained in the proper methods of operating a Sea Scout Ship on underway vessels. The prerequisites of this course are available on the Web at [www.seascout.org](http://www.seascout.org) in the Training section.

## WHAT IS THE SEA SCOUT PROGRAM?

The mission of Sea Scouting is: "To develop, enhance, and expand the Sea Scouts, BSA program in a manner that emphasizes the purposes and achieves the objectives of the Boy Scouts of America, working to help local councils improve their membership and programs."



Sea Scouting is a division of the BSA for young men and women aged 14 (or 13 with the completion of eighth grade) through the age of 20. Its purpose is to bring a character building, citizenship training, and fitness program to the youth of America. Sea Scout ships are organized by churches, civic clubs, schools, maritime organizations, businesses, unions, and other community organizations that provide adult volunteer leaders, program resources, and meeting facilities. Ships plan programs related to maritime careers, seamanship, and service.

Sea Scouting started in 1912 and has a long and colorful tradition. Thousands of young men and women have had the opportunity to follow the traditions of the sea while learning what the future holds for a career related to the sea or a lifelong hobby of recreational boating. Many Sea Scout ships maintain sail or power vessels; follow a challenging rank advancement program; and have nautical uniforming, customs, and ceremonies.

The official voice of the program is on the Web at [www.seascout.org](http://www.seascout.org). A link to the site is also available in the Venturing section of [www.scouting.org](http://www.scouting.org). You can find almost anything you need related to the program on the Sea Scouting website.

If you would like to hear more about the Sea Scout program, go to the Commissioners website ([www.scouting.org/commissioners](http://www.scouting.org/commissioners)) and click on "National Commissioner's Podcast" to listen to the "A Look at Sea Scouting" podcast (Summer 2008): In this episode, Tico takes a look into one of our oldest programs and learns that it may be one of the best-kept secret successes in the organization.

## WHAT DOES A SEA SCOUT SHIP DO?

The program of a Sea Scout ship is based on matching the interests of the members with the skills, equipment, and resources of the chartered organization. Most ships follow the traditional advancement program found in the Sea Scout Manual, No. 33239, available through your local Scout shop or at [www.scoutstuff.org](http://www.scoutstuff.org). The ship's program follows the customs and traditions of the sea and encourages members to earn the ranks of Apprentice, Ordinary, Able, and Quartermaster (equivalent to the BSA Eagle rank for Sea Scouts).

*Sea Scouting continues on Page 18*

Sea Scout advancement includes uniforms, safety, customs, swimming, boating, marlinespike seamanship, piloting, signaling, drill, cruising, galley, sailing, boats, tackle, first aid, navigation, boat maintenance, engines, sea history, lifesaving, equipment, weather, radio, customs, and ideals. In other words, anything nautical.

Some Sea Scout ships prefer to plan their program around a specialty, such as sailing, careers, scuba diving, or an aquatic sport. They may not use Sea Scout uniforms and advancement, but they offer a flexible program to those young adults having a specific career or hobby interest.

## WHERE IS THE PROGRAM RELATED TO MEMBERSHIP AND UNITS?

Membership and unit designations are a part of Venturing membership. Sea Scout ships, as well as youth and adult members, still follow the standards of membership. Any awards, recognitions, and programs offered through Venturing can be earned by a Sea Scout. The advancement and awards program of the Sea Scouts is available to only registered Sea Scouts. A youth who meets the age requirements to join can also belong to Boy Scouts, Venturing, and Sea Scouts all at the same time.

Attending Seabadge will help a commissioner support his assigned Sea Scout units. The course will provide more human and material resources, some networking, and a more thorough understanding of the specifics of leadership of Sea Scouts.

Sea Scouting is an adventure at sea and on land. It's a chance to learn and have fun at the same time. Sea Scouting is organized to promote better citizenship and to improve members' boating skills and knowledge through instruction and practice in water safety, boating skills, outdoor, social, and service experiences, and knowledge of our maritime heritage.

Youth can learn to sail, row, and keep a boat in shape; they can cruise local waters or go sailing on long cruises far from home. Youth can learn to scuba dive and take care of boats. Sea Scout youth are active in camping, social events, tours, regattas, excursions, and seamanship contests. They have a chance to develop maritime skills that can lead to careers later on.

Most ships hold regular, weekly meetings either at their chartered organization or aboard their vessels. Many are formal meetings conducted in either full dress or work uniforms with ceremony. Swimming, lifesaving, first aid, Coast Guard Auxiliary Sailing Skills and Seamanship, and cardiopulmonary resuscitation courses are taught with the ship by their own adult leaders and youth officers. The state safe boating course is also offered by many ships. These courses are open to the public. Occasionally movies are shown, contests between the ship's crews are held, or inter-ship visits are arranged.

## HOW IS SEA SCOUTS MANAGED ON A COUNCIL LEVEL?

The position of the council Sea Scouts commodore is used in some councils where there are multiple ships chartered. Each council appoints this position and determines the hierarchy within the volunteer structure. This person should have the ability to recruit and give leadership to the various subcommittees and should have influence with the maritime community. Experience as a Sea Scout leader is desirable but not necessary.

If the council uses this approach, the position's responsibilities would include:

### Principal Responsibilities

1. To be responsible for working directly with the council Sea Scout committee as chair in organizing and planning a healthy and progressive Sea Scout program.
2. To establish and maintain cooperative relationships with the entire organization with a special emphasis on cooperation with other special interest Venturing clusters.

3. To recruit, train, and direct vice commodores to coordinate the functions of the Sea Scouts committee through sales, training, program, service, and boat and gear teams.
4. To work in cooperation with the council staff member assigned to Sea Scouts.
5. To conduct regular meetings of the council Sea Scouts committee. Give leadership to their efforts, set objectives, and make decisions in the best interests of Sea Scouts.
6. To encourage councils to organize new Sea Scout ships and improve the quality of existing ships leading to longer tenure of members and leaders.
7. To supervise the policies and standards related to Sea Scout advancement, activities, and programs such as regattas, training courses, or conferences if desired by councils.
8. To develop and support, upon request, Sea Scout functions at regional, area, and council Boy Scouting, Venturing, and Sea Scout activities and conferences.
9. To serve as a liaison between council, area, and regional Sea Scouts Committee.
10. To establish and maintain cooperative relationships with council boating and maritime organizations.

Some councils have the person who is overseeing the Sea Scout program reporting to the council program vice president or the council Venturing chair. The main thing to remember is to have representation of the Sea Scout program in guiding the decisions that are made.

## HOW CAN SEA SCOUTS HELP YOUR COUNCIL AND THE OTHER PROGRAMS?

The support that can be provided by your local Sea Scout ships can be a great addition to helping your other Scouting units. They can assist Cub Scout packs with learn-to-swim activities, Cub Scout cruises, and district and council nautical boating activities. They can assist Boy Scouts with their aquatics merit badges and other boating activities, either on a unit, district, or council level. Venturing crews can work closely with their local ships in planning day or overnight activities centered around nautical activities. Many of these activities can help the Sea Scouts earn their service and advancement rank requirements.

## CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF SEA SCOUTS

The Sea Scout Centennial 2012 is quickly approaching. Great plans are being developed throughout the country to involve Sea Scouts and other Scouts in their local areas to experience the program and to become more aware of its rich heritage. Events to commemorate the 100th anniversary will take place during 2012 in many areas with a two-fold goal: (1) allow as many current Sea Scouts to participate in their area or region or travel across the country to other events planned, and (2) allow other Scouting members and youth and families in the community to be exposed to Sea Scout events.

Units, districts, councils, and areas can submit plans for their event to be an official centennial event if they follow the established criteria. The criteria to qualify are available on the website, along with an application to apply for approval.

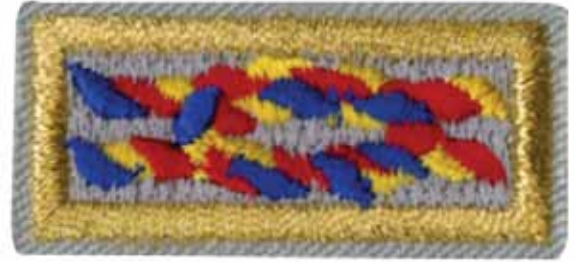
## RECRUITING CAMPAIGN FOR SEA SCOUTS

Sea Scouts are proud to announce the kickoff of the Sea Scout Centennial 2012 Countdown, a nationwide recruiting drive. The theme is "What Did You Do This Weekend?" These special days or recruiting weeks are scheduled for the spring and fall, or any time that meets your unit's schedule.

The challenge to all Sea Scouts in 2012 is to increase our membership from 7,000 to 10,000 members. This will require every Sea Scout ship to recruit six new Sea Scouts between now and December 31, 2012, or to organize new ships to serve areas where there are currently few or no Sea Scouts being served.



## WHAT'S NEW AT THE BSA



 BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

**Coming soon...  
BeAScout  
Put Scouting on the map!**

**The BSA is putting Scouting on the map!**

That's right! The BSA is putting Scouting on the map all across the nation! In time for Join Scouting 2010, the Boy Scouts of America will have its own joining Web page with information on Scouting, plus an actual Google map application that will help potential Scouts and their parents find packs, troops, and crews in their communities. *It's real and it's coming!*

**When?**

On June 1, the National Council will stage a new national Web page address and roll out training on the new BeAScout Google map unit locator.

**How will it work?**

In a nutshell, unit leaders will be able to update their unit's Google "pin" – the bubble you see on Google maps – through MyScouting. They can add their unit meeting time, location, phone number, unit Web site address if they have one, as well as a contact name for the unit. *It's easy!*

**Why is this important for the BSA?**

1. **Consistent marketing.** One national Web site (not 300) we can use in marketing materials, PSAs, etc., that directs potential Scouts to local units.
2. **Find Scouting Near You!** It's a great way to find Scouting in your community.
3. **"Join Now!"** An easier way to invite families to join.

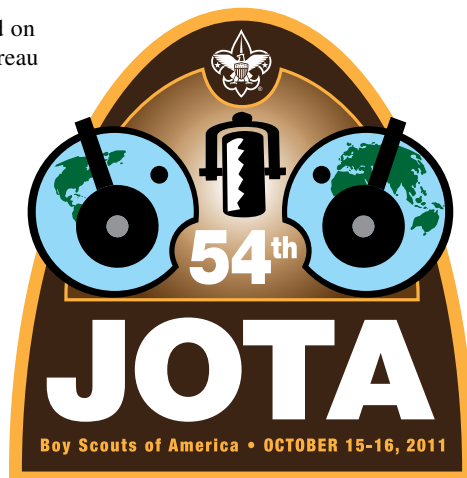


BeAScout Launch: What is BeAScout? Updated 5-13-2010

Go to: [www.beascout.org](http://www.beascout.org)

## Jamboree-on-the-Air

The 54th Jamboree-on-the-Air is being held on October 15–16, 2011. The World Scout Bureau reported that the 2010 JOTA had just over 700,000 Scout participants from nearly 6,000 amateur radio stations! Let's top that this year. If your council is already involved, look at what you can do to involve still more Scouts in the effort. If your council is not active in JOTA, please tap into your local ham radio community to get something going. You can find a searchable database of ham radio clubs at <http://www.arrrl.org/find-a-club>. This website is operated by the Amateur Radio Relay League, the national association for amateur radio. The BSA and ARRL just signed a memorandum of understanding to foster cooperation on JOTA and many other activities. A full range of JOTA support materials is also available at <http://www.scouting.org/jota>.



## Scouting Alumni

For more than a year, the BSA alumni reconnection program has been in operation. As of mid-March, over 180,000 alumni had reconnected by registering at [www.BSAalumni.org](http://www.BSAalumni.org). Most of the alumni were not already active with their local district or council in a volunteer position, and some of them are sure to be good unit commissioner prospects. On average, there are over 600 reconnected alumni per council nationwide, with some councils having several times that many and others having less. However, all councils have some.

Councils have access to their list of reconnected alumni. The Alumni Relations office at the national office can easily inform them how to access it.

The BSA definition of its alumni is: Everyone positively and personally impacted by the Boy Scouts of America—former Scouts, family members of Scouts past and present, volunteers past and present, community leaders, and the millions of Americans who benefit from Scouting in their communities every day.

Benefits for alumni include:

- The *Alumni Alive!* quarterly electronic newsletter
- Access to the online Alumni Scrapbook, where alumni can post their own Scouting stories
- A free one-year membership to the National Scouting Museum
- Free cell phone ring tones of familiar bugle calls
- A discounted subscription rate for *Scouting* magazine
- And more!

Recently, the new Alumni Award was announced, and the recognition items for it include one of the finest looking square knots of them all and a lapel pin, which award recipients can wear when they're not in Scout uniform. The requirements are available to reconnected alumni at [www.BSAalumni.org](http://www.BSAalumni.org).

# Unit Commissioner Box Score

As of March 2011 (First Quarter)

Region	Traditional Units*		Unit Commissioners Needed		Unit Commissioners Registered		Need to Recruit		Percent of Need Filled		Commissioner Ratio	
	Last Year	This Year	Last Year	This Year	Last Year	This Year	Last Year	This Year	Last Year	This Year	Last Year	This Year
Northeast	17,110	16,394	5,701	5,462	3,717	3,786	1,984	1,676	65.2%	69.3%	4.6	4.3
Southern	27,408	25,897	9,137	8,633	5,470	5,337	3,667	3,296	59.9%	61.8%	5.0	4.9
Central	24,428	23,512	8,143	7,835	5,545	5,758	2,598	2,077	68.1%	73.5%	4.1	3.8
Western	40,729	39,869	13,575	13,289	8,445	9,551	5,130	3,738	62.2%	71.9%	4.8	4.2
<b>National</b>	109,675	105,672	36,556	35,219	23,177	24,432	13,379	10,787	63.4%	69.4%	4.7	4.3

\* Does not include Learning for Life Groups or LFL Exploring Posts

## National Commissioner Service Team

National Commissioner Service Chairman	Scott Sorrels	scott.sorrels@sutherland.com
National Commissioner Service Recruitment and Retention Chair	Ellie Morrison	es Morrison@sbcglobal.net
National Commissioner Service Training Chair	Tim Acree	tim.acree@comcast.net
National Commissioner Service Resources Chair	Darlene Sprague	darsprague@roadrunner.com
National Commissioner Service Roundtable Chair	Dan Maxfield	dmaxfil@yahoo.com
National Commissioner Service Staff Adviser	Mark R. Wappel	mark.wappel@scouting.org

## 2011 Dates of Interest

### Philmont Training Center

#### Week 2: June 12–18, 2011

How to Conduct a College of Commissioner Council Commissioners  
Effective Leadership of Commissioner Service  
The Unit Commissioner—Supporting Unit Needs  
Council Key 3—with National Key 3  
District Key 3—Key Leadership for the Future

#### Week 6 : July 10–16, 2011

Building Sustainable Membership Through Religious Emblems

#### Week 7: July 17–23, 2011

Cub Scout and Boy Scout Roundtables and Venturing Forums

#### Week 9: July 31–August 6, 2011

District Key 3—Key Leadership for the Future

#### Week 10: August 7–13, 2011

Membership Growth for Districts and Councils

### DFW Marriott Hotel—Grapevine, Texas

#### October 10, 2011

National Commissioner Service Task Force Meeting

“An individual step in character training is to put responsibility on the individual.”

Baden-Powell

Thanks to the volunteers who contributed to this edition of *The Commissioner*: **Craig Bailey, George Crowl, Cassie Johnson, Jennifer Lowe, and Jim Virgin.**

For comments or more information:

**EDITOR:** Mark Wappel, Community Alliances Team, Membership Impact Department, Council Solutions Group  
National Council, Boy Scouts of America, SUM 211  
1325 W. Walnut Hill Lane, P.O. Box 152079  
Irving, Texas 75015-2079  
Telephone: 972-580-2388 • Fax: 972-580-2340  
Email: mark.wappel@scouting.org