

OCTOBER: PREPARING FOR YOUR FIRST MEETING

MUSIC FULL THEN UNDER

BRYAN: Hello, and welcome to the October ScoutCast. I'm Bryan on Scouting Blogger Bryan Wendell and I'm joined by Lee Shaw, the new Scout Executive of the W.D. Boyce Council in Peoria, Illinois. Lee has graciously said he'll finish out the ScoutCast year with us even with his new gig, so good to see you, Lee.

LEE: Good to see you as well, Bryan. OK, listeners, we've had discussions on new unit development and recruiting youth and leaders, so now is the time to start planning those meetings and activities.

BRYAN: But first things first, right? We don't want to throw everything out there at once, so let's figure out what you need to do to Be Prepared for that first meeting.

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And to help us with that is Lorie McGraw. Lorie has been a Scouting volunteer for 23 years with the Indian Waters Council in Columbia, South Carolina, serving as Den Leader and on the District Committee and a bunch of other jobs. She currently is the Council Commissioner for Roundtables and somehow, she found time to also prepare to be an Assistant Scoutmaster for a new all-girl troop that will start next year. So, Lorie, thank you for being here. Welcome to ScoutCast.

LORIE: Oh, I'm very happy to be here. Thank you, Bryan.

BRYAN: OK. So, what is the very first thing you want to do once you said, "Yes, I will be a troop leader?"

LORIE: The first thing to do is to make sure that you how troops are run, and the best way to do that is to visit Boy Scout Troops that are currently running are going to be in your districts and in your council.

LEE: In addition to visiting Boy Scout troops to get yourself up to speed, what are the other things you should be doing?

LORIE: You should think through exactly what that first several meetings are going to be, because you don't want people to come to a meeting and then just stand around and look at each other. It needs to be planned out. Have several types of leadership games and team-building games that you have prepared so that the people who arrive early will have something to do until everybody else gets there. And then run the meeting as it would be in a Scout troop meeting, which would be that you would have an opening and somebody addressing some of the things that we're going to be doing during the meeting, and then go into activities. The activities for the first meeting might be doing things in a large group and save that breaking into patrols business for later. You might have more girls there at a later date, and so operating as one patrol at first might really be the best thing. And have something active for them to do. It can be games, it can be planning an outing, and those things are what's going to make the girls want to come back. You should be looking at the different resources that can help with planning meetings and planning outings. The best one is right on Scouting.org on the Boy Scout page. There're all sorts of meeting planners and roundtable topics and, by roundtable, for those who don't know what it is, is a monthly leadership meeting that should be happening in your district or in your council. And those topics are going to be things that you can be doing in the next month. There's everything from how to

start a meeting to how to end a meeting. And when you have all these kids that are gonna be coming to your house or your unit, you want to make sure that they know what's going on, but you need to know what's going on first, so make sure that you look at those resources. Ask your district training team. Ask your district representative. Ask anybody who is in Scouting the troop next door. Those people will be able to help direct you how to start those meetings, how to keep them going, and how to make them fun.

BRYAN: As a new leader, are you responsible for recruiting youth into the troop as well?

LORIE: Everyone is responsible for recruiting youth into the troop. Right now, we're just finishing up our fall recruitment for Cub packs and for Boy Scout troops and, at the same time, we're asking girls, "Would you like to be part of a girl Boy Scout type troop?" It's a little confusing for them because they think that it's only for boys, but now it's wonderful because we can say, "Yes, you can come and be in a troop and do the same things that your brothers and neighbors and fathers and grandfathers have done."

LEE: Lorie, I love your answer when you say everyone is responsible for recruiting youth. So that brings me to the point, I know you're not doing this alone, right? And so –

LORIE: Oh, heavens no.

LEE: Who specifically can you rely on for help?

LORIE: My husband was a Scoutmaster for the troop that we are going to be reopening and has continued as a committee chairman for our district committee. And we know so many people that are in Scouting in the training groups and are folks whose kids have aged out, but they're still interested in being in Scouting, and they still have experiences that they can share.

BRYAN: So just like how you guys were saying you can rely on other people, you can also rely on training and the great resources the BSA has prepared, so where specifically do you like to point people when it comes to training or other things that might help them really hit the ground running?

LORIE: There are lots of trainings, and probably the most important one is to make sure that you're registered so that you can go to [My.Scouting.org](https://my.scouting.org) and take the online trainings that are there. In-person trainings are wonderful, but they are not quite as convenient for many people, but the training is something that you're going to need if you're going to be a leader. It's been a while since I've been working with a troop and so I am retaking all of the Assistant Scoutmaster and Scoutmaster trainings to make sure that I'm right up to date. Even if you were a leader in the past, things have changed, and rules have changed, and the kids have changed, so it's really important to find out what training is available. Most of it is available online but I personally prefer in-person training. It's one of the best ways that you can network with people who have been there and done that and use their resources as well. And it also brings you into contact with folks who may be are not actively leading a troop right now but have done so in the past, and they are invaluable resources that you

can use for making sure that your meetings are going just swimmingly; including things like swimming! One of our first things that we're going to be doing is we've arranged with a local community pool to be able to put these girls through swim tests so that we can then immediately go into some high adventure things such as canoeing and kayaking.

BRYAN: Will you and your girls be getting together and having any type of informal gatherings before February starts?

LORIE: Oh, yes, absolutely. Right now, we're getting interested people and we're going to be having some casual get-togethers, doing a few Scouting things. They won't count towards advancement, but the kids will be able to practice them, and so that when it does come time for them to be able to advance, they're going to be able to do those things right away. And just to get the girls so that they know each other so that they bond, and we can work on a little bit of youth leading by allowing them the opportunity to get to know each other so that they can lead.

LEE: Well, that's outstanding. And as you know, Lorie, our listeners are cutting edge. They're out in front and we try to keep them as informed as possible, and so is there anything else about preparing to be a troop leader that ought to be shared with our listeners?

LORIE: There are a number of things that you do need to be aware of. One of them is to make sure that you subscribe to the Scouting Wire, which I'm not sure if people are aware of this. I know that some of my friends are not and I'm always telling them that they need to just go to Scouting Wire and, sign up and that you'll get everything that's coming down the pike as far as

news and, changes. Because so much of this is new to us that changes are going to happen, and so information that you had from six months ago probably isn't up to date and maybe has changed, and it's very important to know what those changes are.

BRYAN: Scouting Wire and then also [Scouting.org/FamilyScouting](https://www.scouting.org/FamilyScouting).

LORIE: Scouting.org - read everything. They have and are going to be having more information on things that you can do, how to do the various different merit badges, different topics that you can have the kids discuss. And here is the thing that I find most important. Scouting at the 11 to 17-year-old level is youth-led, so let the youth lead. They're not going to be able to lead necessarily at first because they haven't been in contact with youth-led units, and that's where other troops that are in the area can help; going and visiting them, talking with them. Venturing crews are wonderful and an excellent source of older girls that have been in Scouting for a while and want to be able to help lead younger girls. And, boy, anytime that you can get some older girls involved, those young girls are just like the young guys. They look at those older kids and they go, "I want to be that guy or that girl," and that is one of the things that is truly inspiring about Scouting.

BRYAN: Speaking of inspiring, Lorie, your story is pretty inspiring; You've been involved in Scouting for many years now and had a number of positions. but you've decided to be a part of this new girl troop. Why was that important for you to take this new journey?

LORIE: As soon as I heard that the BSA was going to be allowing girls to first into Cub Scouts and then into Scout troops, it was like somebody had just given me the pony that I've been promised for the last 50 years, and I was

so excited. I've loved going into classrooms and telling people about Scouting. And one of the things that just tore my heart was you'd say, "Who wants to go fishing? Who wants to go hiking? Who wants to go camping?" and all of the kids are going, "me, me, me!" And then you had to say, "OK, boys, come and talk to me." And the look on the girls' faces was just crushing. And so now I get to go and say, "Everybody has a chance to go." This is gonna be something that is so exciting! We love it and all of our friends are in it, and it's the most terrific way to meet and make friends in the entire world.

LEE: Wow, that is an awesome story there, Lorie. and I so much appreciate that.

BRYAN: You've helped us really make that first meeting seem like a less daunting prospect. So, Lorie, thank you for joining us on this episode of ScoutCast.

LORIE: You're very welcome, Bryan, and thank you for having me on.

LEE: Don't go anywhere. We'll be right back with Reminders and Tips after this brief Safety Moment.

Safety Moment – Intruders

LEE: Oh my! And that's exactly why we have Safety Moments. But now for Reminders and Tips, let's start with council roundtables. Check with your local Scouting professional, the Council Service Center or website, or the Scout calendar to locate meeting sites and times.

BRYAN: There's really no better way to have a great unit than to experience the idea sharing that goes on at those roundtables. And here's a question you should be asking yourself: Are all your committee positions filled? Check out the September 2016 ScoutCast for everything you need to know about the troop committee.

LEE: And just to review, you should have a committee chair, a secretary/treasurer, advancement chair, outdoor chair, membership chair, and a finance or fundraising chair. The committee chair is responsible for filling all the slots, but leaders can help out by remaining on the lookout for good candidates at their work, church, neighborhood, or even the gym.

BRYAN: You might be saying to yourself, "I have no idea who qualifies as an advancement chair." So, for that, just go download the July 2017 ScoutCast and you'll find out just how easy it is to identify and cultivate those non-unit volunteers. Also, this is a good reminder to make sure that all new leaders complete their Boy Scout Leader Specific Training and, of course, the mandatory Youth Protection Training.

LEE: In the October issue of *Boys' Life*, ride along with a Venture crew from Georgia that bikes 184 miles on the famous Chesapeake and Ohio Canal. Also, learn how Scouts in Kentucky help protect the bat population at a local state park.

BRYAN: A bat story in October. That seems appropriate.

LEE: Boooo!

BRYAN: Yeah, exactly. *(Laughter)* In the September-October issue of *Scouting Magazine* meanwhile, new leaders can get 50 tried-and-true tips to get started down the Scouting trail, so you want to make sure to read that. And, by the way, one of those tips, Lee, just happens to be listening to CubCast and ScoutCast, so that means we're kind of famous.

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BRYAN: But, that music you hear means this October ScoutCast has come to an end. So, we want to thank our guest Lorie McGraw for joining us.

LEE: And if there are other topics you like to hear about or you just want to let us know how we're doing, send us an email to ScoutCast@scouting.org or tweet to [@BSAScoutCast](https://twitter.com/BSAScoutCast). With that, I'm Lee Shaw.

BRYAN: And I'm Bryan Wendell, and go ahead, tweet about us. You know you want too.

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