

SCOUTS-L

COMMISSIONERS

Date: Thu, 28 Jul 1994 02:13:59 -0400 (EDT)
From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@cap.gwu.edu>
Subject: Re: Distinguished Commissioner Award

Wes,

Because recognition is a key to keeping tenured leaders (including commissioners), it would make sense to ask your Key-3 to review the roles to see which commissioners, etc. have qualified for the Distinguished Commissioner Award, Scouter Key, and Scouter Training Award. While it may be a little embarrassing to note that you are among those qualified, it is more important that you help others to be recognized, who may after a while quit, if they think their service is going unnoticed. You probably are among those self-starters with a strong sense of who you are where recognition is not as important. But there are many out there who do not share those characteristics and need recognition every once in a while, even if its not a formal award. Encourage your people to take the time to recognize service. The payoffs can be tremendous.

**Yours in Scouting, Michael F. Bowman, a/k/a Professor Beaver
Deputy District Commissioner Exploring, GW Dist., NCAC, BSA
Speaking only for myself, but with Scouting Spirit . . .
_____ mfbowman@CAP.GWU.EDU _____**

Date: Fri, 29 Jul 1994 23:35:51 -0400
From: Susan Ganther <susan@GIBBS.OIT.UNC.EDU>
Subject: Re: Distinguished Commissioner A

On Fri, 29 Jul 1994, Wes Mays wrote:

> I've had excellent relationships with some of my unit leaders and
> poor relationships with others. Most of my good relationships have
> been with most of the Cubmasters and the younger Scoutmasters (I'm
> 35 years young.) I find that inexperienced Scouters are the most
> receptive; while the "old" hands feel that they don't need or want
> outside interference.
>
> There is one old timer (30 years as SM) in my area that invites me
> most cordially and extends every courtesy. Yet I can tell that he
> would rather just not have me around. I cannot tell if he is afraid
> that I'm going to report back to the district or what. I just know
> from his reaction that I am an outsider. I think part of my
> suspicions are due to the fact that is a little too anxious to tout
> the achievements of his troop; it is very obvious from observing that
> he has an active and successful program. I certainly tell him that
> he is doing a wonderful job, maybe he doesn't need to hear that from
> me, but I plan to continue telling him.

Those of us who are inexperienced in our positions are glad to have someone around who can give us answers when the inevitable questions come

up. What the folks with the long service records need is recognition. I worked for a while with a SM with 25+ years in his position and his chief complaint about the council/district folks was that in all his years he had never recieved any kind of acknowledgement from them. Service anniversaries

deserve some kind of formal recognition beyond what the troops parents do, sometimes they do nothing either because they do not know or because they do not appreciate the significance. It costs nothing to call the local paper and let them know that a local volunteer has reached the quarter century mark in service to the organization, but it would let them know that someone has noticed and cares enough to do something about

it. Another low budget way to say thanks would be to send an updated service star with a note expressing appreciation and hoping that you'll get the chance to send them another one in another 5, 10 or whatever years.

YIS, Susan

Date: Fri, 29 Jul 1994 22:54:52 -0400 (EDT)
From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@cap.gwu.edu>
Subject: Re: Distinguished Commissioner A

Randy,

Probably the hardest job facing a Commissioner fresh from Wood Badge, Commissioners' College or Commissioner training is to curb some of the enthusiasm with common sense. Although its been 40 or so years since Commissioners were supposed to ride herd on unit leaders, enthusiasm sometimes produces a similar effect. Many of us at one time or another fresh from the exhilaration of training, etc., were ready to go gang-busters and see that units got good Scouting. Now don't get me wrong, enthusiams is a good thing, used properly.

The thing that we all have to remember is that the unit leader is there year-round, answers the cranky calls from parents, deals with the tough problems his Scouts have and still usually does a pretty good job of bringing off a program. He/she is not looking for more advice from an outsider a lot of the time, especially if the advice seems to make things harder.

Sometimes the best approach for a new Commissioner to take is a little more passive in appearance. The Commissioner can introduce himself by telephone, relay new information, ask if there are any problems the unit is having with District/Council where he can help take the load off the leader, and gently suggest he/she will call back every so often to pass information. After a few calls, the Unit Commissioner can usually work his/her way into a visit. The first visit is critical. This is a time to listen, to find things to compliment and then ask where he/she can be of help before leaving. Similarly succeeding visits at first will need to be more receiving than transmitting. After a while most unit leaders figure out the Commissioner is really trying to be of help, not a threat, and a potential resource. Once this happens the unit leader may initiate requests for advice. Then the dialog begins. The bottom-line is that the Unit Commissioner has to take the time to become accepted, accept himself that everything is not going to be perfect in the unit, watch, compliment, and be there. Translate enthusiasm into patience and a long term commitment.

Of course there's always the situation where something is so out of line with BSA policy or dangerous that immediate action is necessary. In such situations there's usually room for diplomacy, although it may not

immediately be welcome.

I meant to give my \$.02 worth and ended giving a bit more. Oh well. Might as well add another two bits.

Here's a tough one: You are an ADC. Your bright new Unit Commissioner, Jumpin' Jim has spent months developing a degree of rapport with Ivan "Independent Ivan" Doitmyway, the Scoutmaster of an old large troop. Jim tells you that he's really becoming successful at hearing what goes on and is a little more than distressed. At the last campout he heard that young Scouts were severely hazed (covered with peanut butter and moss, scared by costumed invaders in the camp, etc) and that the only activity besides camping and cooking was dungeons and dragons, which started Friday and ran through Sunday. None of the Scouts worked on ranks, unless their father was an ASM or at the Campout. Jumpin' Jim can barely contain himself, he thinks the SM should be fired, etc. Despite all of this, you know that the troop produces three to five Eagle Scouts a year and has pretty steady advancement overall. You also know that the SM has been through training and has the Training Award, Scouter's Key and Scoutmaster's Award of Merit. What do you do?

Caveat: the circumstances described above are entirely fictional and of my own creation and not meant to replicate any actual circumstance. Just thought it might be interesting to see your viewpoints.

Yours in Scouting, Michael F. Bowman, a/k/a Professor Beaver
Deputy District Commissioner Exploring, GW Dist., NCAC, BSA
Speaking only for myself, but with Scouting Spirit . . .
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Date: Sat, 30 Jul 1994 22:52:43 -0400 (EDT)
From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@cap.gwu.edu>
Subject: Re: Tough Commissioner Question

Freemason wrote quite an answer and hit a lot of important points. I'm glad you caught the YPP issue. I purposely did not place that in the SM's "resume". Similarly, I liked how you approached the fact that his training might be just a little dated.

The critique was great. And I would ask a lot of the same questions. There are also a few more that I'll share latter on, because I'm anxious to see what other Commissioners think of the situation. I suspect we have all had an experience along the way where a chain of events got set in motion before all the facts were verified, your questions would make you a welcome addition on our Commissioner's staff. Thanks for kicking off the discussion!

To the rest of the list I welcome your observations, comments and thoughts.

**Yours in Scouting, Michael F. Bowman, a/k/a Professor Beaver
Deputy District Commissioner Exploring, GW Dist., NCAC, BSA
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Date: Sun, 31 Jul 1994 01:24:00 -0400 (EDT)
From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@cap.gwu.edu>
Subject: Observations on Distinguished Commissioner Hypothetical
To: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@CAP.GWU.EDU>

OBSERVATIONS I HAD ON THE DISTINGUISHED COMMISSIONER HYPOTHETICAL

Note: I mailed this to myself after the first response, because I wanted to catch my thoughts while they were fresh and because I had time on the weekend. By so doing I can forward the post later when it is appropriate without using the hour we are limited to daily on our local server at CAP ACCESS - GWU. Sorry for the length.

1. As the ADC in this situation, you have probably realized that you need to find out a lot more before you or the Commissioner's Staff can be effective in this situation.
2. Your first problem is to advise Jumpin' Jim on what to do immediately or he'll probably figure out something on his own and it may be guns ablazing (to borrow from Freemason). You can make him part of the crisis team in this situation by laying out your plan of approach and asking him to help you in the fact-finding with specific areas (maybe limited) before action takes place.
3. As ADC you can tell Jumpin' Jim that your plan of action is something like this (more comment on the hypothetical after this):
 - a. Fact-finding - answer as many of the important questions as you can.
 - 1] Jumpin' Jim can go through the records with the District Training Chairman to see which troop leaders received what training at what time. This should probably be couched in terms of reviewing all units that Jumpin' Jim has to avoid singling out the old troop. Or it can be a special project to review all of the units in your service area with Jim leading the charge. Won't hurt to keep it general and non-specific and can avoid rumors.
 - 2] Jumpin' Jim can continue to go to the next meeting or two and listen and ask a few questions that are not accusatory, if he can

work them into conversation (this is a judgment call); e.g., he can find out which leaders were on the campout, where it was, dates, and get a feel for what boys were there.

3] You may want to check around to see who knows the SM or any of the ASMs and see what the grapevine says. This needs to be pretty subtle, because you don't want to signal that the Commissioner Staff is on the hunt - its not.

- b. Team review - That's you the ADC, your Unit Commissioner, the District Commissioner and the Senior District Executive (especially if you suspect that YPP issues are involved). Review the facts known and not known. Tell Jumpin' Jim that the team will develop a team plan at this point with specific responsibilities for each player and reassure him that you are not going to overstep into his relationship with the troop (you don't want to anyway).
- c. Actions decided by the team. Suggest to Jumpin' Jim that these actions may include more questions that he will have to ask, contact with the SM, contact with the Committee Chairman, or the Chartered Organization. However, stress that the questions will need to be pursued in a definite order. It's a good time to point out that, if we get to far ahead of ourselves when can polarize the situation and find that the Chartered Organization is backing the SM until death.

4. Now here are some of the questions that I thought needed to be answered when I designed the hypothetical (and I know that there were a lot of other good questions raised in discussion that should be added):

- a. Who were the adult leaders and other adults present at the Campout?
- b. Was the Scoutmaster there?
- c. Who was in charge and when?
- d. Were any of the other leaders present trained?
- e. When was the last training for each?
- f. Have any of those leaders attended YPP Training, if so when?
- g. When did this Campout take place? (Was it recently or a long time ago?)
- h. Where was the Campout?
- i. Was it within 50 miles of the troop's meeting place?
- j. If not, did the troop get a tour permit? (If they goofed here,

their liability could have been much greater, if something went wrong or had gone wrong - this gets attention)

- k. What did the Scouts plan as the activities for the Campout?
- l. Who approved the Patrol Leader's Council's plan for the campout?
- m. Did the PLC's plan include Dungeons and Dragons (D&D) and/or the hazing?
- n. Regarding D&D - its popular among early teens as a game - what do you know about it? Does it teach any Scouting values? Is it appropriate for a Scout activity? (You may need to use your resources to find out more, before you are ready to take this on)
- o. Did any of the alleged events take place?
- p. What were the circumstances?
- q. If they did take place, which adults, if any knew in advance?
- r. Did any of the adults know about these activities when they were taking place?
- s. If they did, what did they do?
- t. Was their action an appropriate resolution (meaning you really don't need to add more)?
- u. Is the adult leadership now aware of the problems, if the allegations are true?
- v. What has the adult leadership done since the campout?
- w. Is their post-campout action an appropriate response?
- x. Has the SPL or any youth leader taken action (I've seen an SPL take a whole troop to task after an event for poor conduct without the SM asking)?
- y. Was any Scout hurt?
- z. Was any Scout molested by an older Scout?
- aa. What has been done?
- ab. What still needs to be done?

5. Depending on the answers to these questions, you as the ADC will have to decide who needs to be involved at what stage in the resolution of any problems discovered. You may decide that unit has discovered its problem and addressed it appropriately. If so, it wouldn't hurt to just to run it by your District Commissioner and District Executive, just in case something else comes of the events that you didn't know about (nobody likes surprises!).

6. Assuming that there are problems that need to be resolved, as the ADC you probably will want to involve both your District Commissioner and District Executive in the process. However, you don't want to get too

many folks involved. The more people involved, the more who talk, the more the rumors and pretty soon you no longer have any control and damage

is being done. Back to the main point here. You want your District Commissioner involved to give you support, advice and act as a sounding board. He will want to be involved, because he's responsible for every unit's health. Because he will not in all probability have any relation to the unit, he can give impartial and independent advice and help make sure that emotion doesn't get ahead of reason. Because of the potential for YPP problems and perhaps other policy issues, the DE needs to be aware

of what you are doing. The worst thing that could happen is for you to develop a great plan only to find out that a distraught parent has called the DE and that he's already confronting the Chartered Organization's Institutional Head, the Committee Chairperson or SM, based on a very one-sided view (So much for all your hopes to do it right). Instead show him that you have a good grasp on the situation and that you are going to help him get to the bottom of the situation. There are things he can do to make your job easier too; e.g. records in the Council Office, information on prior complaints (if any), ideas, knowledge about Council, Regional and National policies, etc. In most cases the DE will be relieved that you are going to do some of the tough stuff and happy to have input. (We all know that no DE, DC, ADC or UC is perfect and that some may want to jump the gun, but this is going to happen anyway, so why

not do your best to cut down on the chances or minimize the risk by taking the team approach? Once folks acknowledge team membership they're less likely to take independent action.)

7. Now that you have a team assembled and know what questions to ask, what

are you really going to do? Situations like this always require a lot of judgment and each of us sees things a little differently. So please realize that there are many right answers depending on the circumstances. As a minimum I think we can probably all agree that the situation needs to

be followed to a conclusion. If we can get Jumpin' Jim to understand that we don't fire SM's or any other leader and can get him to calm down, he can be our best asset. He can be coached to have a very private conversation with the SM. He can use several approaches. He could start by alluding to a problem similar in nature that he's heard about elsewhere. This approach has the advantage of not being accusatory and

allowing the SM to raise his own questions. However, it has the danger of being too thin, if the SM already knows about the problem and suspects that this is the issue. Another approach is ask the SM for advice on what the UC can or should do, given that he has been presented with some allegations that he's not sure about. This allows the SM to explain misunderstandings, if there were any. Suppose for example that the Scouts

were trying to do a Nickolodean style event and all the new guys in the new patrol lost the tug of war and got drug through peanut butter and moss

- no hazing, just "clean" fun. It wouldn't do to have made an accusation only to have the peanut butter on your own face. Pardon the unforgiveable

pun. On the other hand Ivan may reluctantly welcome the opportunity to figure out the mess (especially, if he wasn't on site) or at least to tell you that he has it under control (we can decide later if it is under control). And there's always confrontation. Not usually the recommended approach, but if we end up with pretty strong evidence that something is really amiss and get a wire brush from the SM, we may have no other choice. The downside is that we know will also have to involve the Committee Chairperson and/or Chartered Organization. This could lead to a stalemate, if not carefully handled.

8. Now what? Well, if we decide the problem is still real, we need to figure out what needs to be done. Here it pays to demonstratively place trust in the real decision makers. We can let the Committee Chairperson know what we know and what our concerns are and ask for him/her to address

the issue. A good many Chairpersons will do just that and pretty fairly too. After all their son's welfare is at stake too.

9. Suppose we get the wire-brush from the Chairperson? There's always the Chartered Organization, but this is a step that demands extreme caution. The Chartered Organization wouldn't have approved the SM, ASMs, etc., if it didn't have a lot of confidence in them. Before you go this far, you'd better really have your facts straight and not have a handful of allegations that are unsupported. If you really don't have a strong case, you could end up alienating them and they could decide its too much trouble to charter a unit. The boys get hurt and the problem still isn't solved.

10. Now its clear after walking through these possibilities that maybe

another approach would be to focus on making sure that all of the leaders have current training including YPP. It might also be useful to invite the SM to participate in SM Fundamentals instead of taking him on. You know the old wisdom that nothing teaches like having to teach others.

11. One other thing that I have deliberately left until last, because the facts were not meant to directly suggest a true YPP problem is the issue of YPP. If we find that the information gives us reason to believe that abuse or molestation did occur in the hazing, etc., at any point in the resolution process, then it is mandatory for the Scout Executive to be informed and he in turn must contact appropriate youth protection agencies

in the jurisdiction(s) involved. If this is so, it will have a profound effect on how the matter is resolved. >From that point on, the Scout Executive will have to run the show. There is no way that you want to interfere in any State investigation or inquiry. In fact, if you do, you may be subject to criminal sanctions. Once the flag goes up on this issue, the Commissioner Staff will still have a role to play in assessing leadership, training, etc., and in working with the Chartered Organization and Committee to help keep the troop on its feet, but this will have to be coordinated with the Scout Executive.

12. Remember that this was a hypothetical situation and solution. Each situation you confront in the Commissioner's Service will be unique. And while there are some things that we can learn from an exercise, each situation also will require judgment. And finally, I must also remind the list that in formulating the hypothetical and the hypothetical solution(s), I am not speaking on behalf of the BSA and am simply offering my own observations for the purposes of discussion. In a real situation, I would be the first to strongly urge you to discuss the matter with your District Commissioner and District Executive and to obtain any professional advice warranted. I appreciate your contributions, ideas and thoughts on this case. I think that we all profit from the many different viewpoints on the list and this is no exception.

Yours in Scouting, Michael F. Bowman, a/k/a Professor Beaver
Deputy District Commissioner Exploring, GW Dist., NCAC, BSA
Speaking only for myself, but with Scouting Spirit . . .

_____ mfbowman@CAP.GWU.EDU _____

Date: Sun, 31 Jul 1994 02:02:24 -0400 (EDT)
From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@cap.gwu.edu>
Subject: Observations on Distinguished Commissioner Hypothetical (fwd)
To: Bob Sargeant <sargeant@cu4700.cua.edu>

Bob,

You saw attached to my last posting a copy of the hypothetical I sent to the SCOUTS-L list. My suggested solution is forwarded with this posting below. Thought you might want to see it. I will not send it to the list until discussion peters out. In the meantime, I would value any comments you would care to offer. We've already had some good points raised. I won't incorporate them, because several had asked for me to disclose what I had in mind when I designed the hypothetical before discussion began. I wrote this after the first substantive comments from one source came in. More discussion has followed. Thought it best to do it while I had the time and give an unvarnished commentary to be added to the others.

**Yours in Scouting, Michael F. Bowman, a/k/a Professor Beaver
Deputy District Commissioner Exploring, GW Dist., NCAC, BSA
Speaking only for myself, but with Scouting Spirit . . .**

_____ mfbowman@CAP.GWU.EDU _____

Date: Sun, 31 Jul 1994 14:37:27 BST
From: Ian Ford <ianford@DIRCON.CO.UK>
Subject: Re: Advice to Commissioner " Jim " (Long)

I'm not a BSA Commissioner, but I have been in a similar role as a Group Scout Leader in British Scouting, and have some knowledge of the BSA situation. Some of you might find parts a bit controversial, but that was the idea, wasn't it? To get us thinking rather than find a " right " answer. So here goes with my advice to Jim :

Well Jim... As I see it this hazing issue needs to be addressed. I'm assuming that the story checks out ? You've asked the kids how camp went and heard some stories that concern you ... What I hear you say is there has not been a " complaint " but a few kids are unhappy. I know you have built up a relationship with Ivan, but this could be a tough counselling job. Are you OK dealing with that ?

You will need to work out a line you are comfortable with. But try not to be too judgmental. This guy has good points, too. OK, he's a bit of a dinosaur and not the most sensitive of characters. But he's got a big troop, which means he must have something the kids like.

Why not get Ivan round home, just the two of you. Take the phone off the hook or switch on the ansafone. Sit him down and ask him how the last campout went. Hopefully he would say something about the " initiation " which would show what his feeling were. If not a question like " What's this I heard about swamp monsters ? " might be an opening gambit. I'd then point out that BSA has strict Youth Protection Guidelines - how did he think that they applied in this situation ?

Of course Ivan might say something like " Yeah, I know, don't shower at the same time as the kids. What's that got to do with the kids having a bit of fun and initiating the new kids. Makes a man of em ... never did me any harm, why when I was a lad ... "

If it were me { and I nearly said those forbidden words " If I were you"

then ... } I'd tell my true personal story about how as a young Scout I was the victim of such an experience, and was so upset that I very nearly quit and had my parents bring me home. The stress also brought on an asthma attack. I might add that I still despise the Scoutmaster who condoned it nearly thirty years on, so deep was the impression it made on me.

[Incidentally, I swore at age eleven that if I ever became a Scoutmaster this bullying would not happen in my troop. It didn't. I'm fairly easy-going, but all my Scouts knew that this sort of bullying <would> get them on the next train home.]

I guess if I were talking to Ivan I'd also point out that if a kid got injured or somebody complained he's on his own. BSA won't back him if he breaches YPG. He's up sticky creek without a paddle. Very messy. These days juries in the US can make some very nice awards for " psychological distress " and parents know this. Or what if one of the guys smeared in peanut butter is sensitive to bug bites or gets bitten by a critter ? Or, like I did, has an asthma attack ? Can you imagine taking a kid covered with peanut butter and moss into the emergency room ? That would get the troop noticed.

But you will have to work out an approach you are happy with. I nearly used the words " if I were you " a few minutes ago. Don't do that with Ivan. I'm not you, and you're not Ivan. There are a lot of right ways to do things in Scouting, but what works for me might not work for you or Ivan.

OK, I think you share my personal view that any adult who permits this sort of bullying is a pretty poor Leader, and needs to be straightened out or else thrown out. You feel he must be pretty insensitive not to realise the risk of emotional damage to kids who may already be apprehensive, if not actually homesick, and are not used to camp routine. This is the reality with most boys on their first Scout camp, even if they hide it. And the tough guys often hurt the most inside.

But you won't help him by yelling and screaming. Keep calm. Listen. Try not to get mad ... and if you <do> get mad back off. Say you need to go to the bathroom and cool off there.

But remember your job is to help him , not to dump on him like a ton of bricks. He may genuinely not know, or understand, how what in " my days "

were traditional troop initiations are now regarded as hazing and even as psychological abuse. It sounds like the whole unit leadership would benefit

from YPG training. I'd ask the Chairman if you could arrange a session for

them all, the Committee and the Leaders. Possibly go to a PLC (by prior invitation) and discuss the issue of YPG with the Scouts.

If after that Ivan still doesn't get the message and initiations continue he may have to go ... but that's not our decision. But we'll talk about that if the problem arises.

Now then , Jim. regarding the dungeons and dragons ... Let me say that I can't see a problem if the Scouts <decided> to have a weekend away without any advancement. You look surprised. Well, I see it this way :

Many kids today are under immense pressures to do compete and succeed. They

are expected to be A grade students, on the winning sports team, sing solo in the choir and if they are a Scout to make Eagle before they are thirteen.

OK, I exaggerate ... but some parents do pressurise their kids. Some kids are so programmed they never stop running from one activity to the next.

And

a few crack up under the strain, or take drugs or sniff glue.

So I believe that at times it is quite legitimate to have a " fun " weekend away with your friends at camp, just being buddies and having a good time.

Did the PLC <plan> to have an easy weekend ? If so, that is fine provided that elsewhere in the troop program there are opportunities to advance.

OK Jim, <get up of the floor>, have another coffee and let's look at the facts ...

Do you think there is actually an " advancement problem " with troop 666 ?

Get out the Advancement Reports for the past six months. Have about 75% of the Scouts earned a rank or a merit badge ? I'd say that was good. Less than 50% I'd be concerned and ask questions about their program planning.

Look at the number of Eagle Scouts the troop has produced ... there must be some advancement. Although I'd be worried if all the Eagles were the sons of Leaders or Committee people, because that might suggest that some kids were being coached and pushed, whilst the other kids were left bouncing basketballs in the school gym. Sadly it does happen.

Look at the troop's camping record. Have they participated in Camporees and Council activities ? Are there adventurous activities for the older Scouts, maybe a Venture Crew ? Have all last year's new Scouts been away on at least one weekend camp ? Or most of them ?

But it's worth keeping a discrete eye on things. Maybe ask Ivan and the SP/L what their camping plans for the year are. Turn the conversation to last year and see how they thought it went.

You might want to talk to the ASMs quietly. They are keen , but they need to realise that if you push Scouts too hard they often burn out and quit. I like the support vs challenge theory. If you are teaching a kid to swim and throw him into twelve feet of water that's pretty strong on challenge. Often he will start to swim. But if not, you'd better be prepared to jump in quick, and get wet in the process.

But if you put him in the three feet end with a rubber ring and hold his hand that's pretty good for support, but at some stage you have to take away the rubber ring and let him swim on his own. Otherwise there's no challenge.

Well, I guess being a Scoutmaster is like that. If you don't challenge the boys they get bored and quit. If you put on too much pressure the challenge becomes an insuperable obstacle - and they quit. You need to know the kids

and challenge them to reach just beyond their grasp.

By the way, talking about Youth Protection and psychological pressures on kids, let me tell you a true story . Details have been changed to protect the innocent.

About ten years ago I had a kid in a troop I was responsible for who I will call John. John was under a lot of pressure from his Dad, himself a high flyer in his chosen profession, to achieve excellence in everything he did. Unfortunately John was not academic. I personally think he had some sort of mild learning disability, but his father would not consider the possibility that his kid was anything other than lazy. Significantly, John started off by doing very well in the troop. He was friends with the SM's son, and they would do things together away from the troop. Then John's interest trailed off. He said that there were problems at home. Dad was always complaining that John's school grades were never good enough, he never did enough piano practice, his friends were not " nice " enough, his clothes were not smart enough ... So his dad " grounded " him, and he was not allowed to come to Scouts for a month. I telephoned the father, and thought I had him see reason. John came back, but things were not going well. His behaviour at troop meetings changed and he seemed much less lively.

Soon after that John left home and turned up on the Scoutmaster's door at 2.00 am. He refused to go home, so after a long discussion the SM finally persuaded John to let him call the police, who took the kid home. A few months later John left home again, walked into the local police station and asked how he could get himself "in care " , and in fact ended up in a residential centre. We lost touch, but I heard that John had been in a few minor scrapes with the police, had experimented with drugs and generally had a hard time. I hope he managed to sort himself eventually. He was a nice kid.

But that's enough chat ... let me know how you get on, and I'm always here if you need me. Good luck !

Date: Mon, 1 Aug 1994 00:36:24 -0400 (EDT)
From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@cap.gwu.edu>

Subject: Re: Advice to Commissioner " Jim " (Long)
To: Ian Ford <ianford@DIRCON.CO.UK>

Ian,

Just read your post and loved it. A lot of good advice packed in there. I got a right good chuckle out of your designation of the troop as troop 666. It fits. I've got a lot of ideas on this one too. I'll share those latter after the list has a chance to discuss for a bit.

You really hit the nail on the head in asking whether the Scouts planned a fun weekend. This may have been the agenda.

On the Dungeons & Dragons - is it popular in your neck of the woods? A lot of folks see it as next to devil worship around here, that why I chose it. Could just as easily have been a monopoly tournament. The question I was thinking about was whether it served to teach some Scouting value or skill. Some of the games of D&D around here encourage deceit, lies, etc. Not quite the trustworthy line. I'm not sure there's a right answer on that one, but in our area opinions abound.

Regarding quick reactions, we had a professional one time who wanted an SM

bounced on YPP grounds for allowing the Scouts to practice animal sacrifices, based on some things one of the lads said. Turned out there was a troop joke about the Scoutmaster's blue light bug zapper. The Scouts would feign oohs and aahs at the flash of light as a bug got zapped and referred to it as animal sacrifices. Over-reaction in this case was overstatement. On the other hand it was a bad environmental practice, turns out the zapper only killed harmless insects important to the food chain and that the real villans (female mosquitos) were attracted, but always veered away and hardly were ever zapped. Thought you might enjoy that one.

**Yours in Scouting, Michael F. Bowman, a/k/a Professor Beaver
Deputy District Commissioner Exploring, GW Dist., NCAC, BSA
Speaking only for myself, but with Scouting Spirit . . .**

_____ mfbowman@CAP.GWU.EDU _____

From: Ian Ford <ianford@dircon.co.uk>
To: mfbowman@cap.gwu.edu
Subject: Re: Advice to Commissioner " Jim " (Long)
Date: Tue, 2 Aug 94 6:55:28 BST

>
> **On the Dungeons & Dragons - is it popular in your neck of the woods? A**
> **lot of folks see it as next to devil worship around here, that why I chos**
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> **chain and that the real villains (female mosquitos) were attracted, but**
> **always veered away and hardly were ever zapped. Thought you might**
> **enjoy**
> **that one.**

Oh well, I guess that's the whole staff of Camp Baden-Powell fired ! The building we use as staff meeting room/mess hall has a kitchen with a bug zapper. The junior staff this year started going out into the street and catching bugs to " feed " the zapper, but it didn't last long. I guess having a BZ in a kitchen is OK, where it does kill off flies that carry disease. Actually it did lead to a discussion ... I reminded them about the Scout law " A Scout is kind. He does not kill or injure harmless things .. " and I think they saw the point that it was OK to kill bugs that were a threat to human health in a kitchen, but going to fetch them was not quite fair.

Yes, D&D and analogs are very popular, though I personally do not find them

of any interest. But many of the kids do, and I guess it encourages the use of memory and imagination. I admit I hadn't thought that seriously about the ethical implications, but you are probably right to raise it.

This year we had a crazy junior staff on Summer Camp. Quite a few of them chose to go under " nommes de guerre " so we had " Bullfrog " in the nature area and " Cargamel " in Scoutcraft. Cargamel was clearly a D&D fan, and I gather that there were some D&D games running in the junior staff dorm, mainly after " lights out " !

Ian N Ford ASM Troop 401 (American School in London)
London, UK (Transatlantic Council)
Phone : +44 81 855 4312

Date: Sat, 30 Jul 1994 21:22:19 EDT
From: Freemason@AOL.COM
Subject: Tough Commissioner Question

Mike, you gave us a goody to mull over. I'm going to split this baby into the pieces needed to discuss properly.

>Here's a tough one: You are an ADC. Your bright new Unit Commissioner,
>Jumpin' Jim has spent months developing a degree of rapport with Ivan
>"Independent Ivan" Doitmyway, the Scoutmaster of an old large troop.

Jim

>tells you that he's really becoming successful at hearing what goes on and
>is a little more than distressed.

Well, I'm glad to hear that Jumpin' Jim can talk to Ivan the Terrible. Has any other Unit Commissioner been able to cross that hurdle? How long did it take him to get there?

>At the last campout he heard that young Scouts were severely hazed
>(covered with peanut butter and moss, scared by costumed invaders in
>the camp, etc) and that the only activity besides camping and cooking
>was dungeons and dragons, which started Friday and ran through
>Sunday. None of the Scouts worked on ranks, unless their father
>was an ASM or at the Campout.

Who did the complaining? Parents who were not at the camp? Parents of the new boys? Who? What were the trips objectives? Maybe that was all that was really planned by the boys - D&D, that is. Sometimes a camping trip is just a camping trip. However, the leadership of the troop should have worked some scoutcraft skills into the weekend for the newer boys. But from the looks of it, some advancement work was being done, although not as much as was sufficient in Jim's opinion.

Now, for the real issue: the hazing. We all know that the policies forbid hazing, but we also know that it happens sometimes, anyway - no matter how hard the adult leaders try to clamp down on it. I am not condoning hazing - it is demeaning and can be dangerous - but it does happen.

>Jumpin' Jim can barely contain himself, he thinks the SM should be
>fired, etc. Despite all of this, you know that the troop produces three
>to five Eagle Scouts a year and has pretty steady advancement overall.

- >You also know that the SM has been through training and has the
- >Training Award, Scouter's Key and Scoutmaster's Award of Merit.
- >What do you do?

How many years has Ivan been a leader? how many years since he was trained? Does Ivan help staff training courses? Has he been through Wood Badge? Has he been through Youth Protection Program training? Does he otherwise stay updated?

Realizing that different management styles will produce different results, here is what I would do as an ADC if in this situation (keep in mind that an ADC function is primarily support, and not really a charge function):

- 1) Calm Jim down!!!!
- 2) Ask Jim the aforementioned questions, as well as any other relevant ones which come up during the discussion. They are crucial to any subsequent action.
- 3) Gather information and discuss with the District Commissioner. Any action taken should primarily be between Ivan and Jim, but since Jim is new, he will need additional consultation and advice on handling the situation.
- 4) Under no circumstances should Jim be allowed to go in with guns a-blazing. He could manage to alienate Ivan, not only against Jim, but also the entire Commissioner Staff. Besides, if the Chartered Organization is happy with Ivan's results, then they will support him to the death, so to speak.

If the hazing allegation was from overheard conversation between the boys or a direct notification by one of the victims ("Boy, Tommy sure looked funny as a swamp thing", or "Mr Jim, guess what happened last campout?"), then Jim should quietly talk to Ivan after the meeting, and NOT in front of the boys: make up a parable about a troop (NOT in this council, never in this district) that you heard had a hazing get out of hand and someone got hurt; now parents were up in arms and the Scoutmaster was in hot water, with no support from local council or BSA, because he did not follow policy. (There are plenty of these stories to go around, unfortunately - make it far enough away that he will not be easily able to verify, and be vague about the particulars; make it sound like a

grapevine story the more apocryphal the better.)

Ivan should then be told "I would hate to see any of my fellow Scout Leaders fall into the same pit." Unless Ivan is a maroon, then he will get the hint, without losing face. Then in the next sentence, Jim should suggest Ivan get updated on his YPP if he has not done so already. The YPP is to prevent things from happening that would leave the leadership in that cold and lonely place - out on a limb and twisting in the wind.

If Jim does not have the savvy to pull it off, then the ADC should go through the same charade, especially if the ADC and Ivan have anything resembling a mutual respect.

Finally, Jim should be tactfully reminded that his job description does NOT include firing scoutmasters (only the Chartered Organization with Troop Committee support can do this), only crisis intervention in times of need.

I would then make some follow-up observations with periodic phone calls between Jim and me, and maybe tagging along with Jim to a couple of meetings.

I would also get Ivan to help staff the District Scout Leader Training (with the blessing of the District Training Team Chairmand) - but NOT policy don'ts or YPP - he will HAVE to follow the book, and he will be a "captive" audience to any issue that needs recycling.

Unfortunately, I was in the position of initiating a firing of a scoutmaster. I made no recommendations, but I did get the Chartered Organization and Troop Committee stirred up. The Scoutmaster quit attending, and the youth leadership had no good adult examples, so the program went to H*** in a handbasket real fast. Committee Chairman was attending, and he was ready to quit - what was I going to do about it?

I told him that he needed to call the Committee together, and get the Chartered Representative there, as well as the Scoutmaster. I got the District Commissioner there, and we all talked it out. They got a new Scoutmaster AND Committee Chairman at the same time - attitudes improved and the troop is doing much better. They have had three Eagles in the last year, and should have a couple more by December; more 1st Classes too.

BTW, I went on record that the Scoutmaster should not be "fired", but that the Committee needed to give him more support, with a more positive attitude, than they apparently have. After all, the boys who were being impacted were THEIRS.

Boy, that was a good hypothetical situation. Maybe I'll use it in my Commissioner training.

Date: Mon, 1 Aug 1994 00:49:29 -0400 (EDT)
From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@cap.gwu.edu>
Subject: Re: Tough Commissioner Question
To: Freemason@AOL.COM

Randy,

Thanks for the encouragement. If the list responds positively and the discussion bears it out, I'll spend some time to come up with a few more.

I too was once in the College Scouter Reserve. Now we both know were in the 40 something crowd. I also share a love for commissioner work. My start was in the Commissioner section of National Camp School. I started as a Camp Commissioner in two successive Councils (Crossroads of America and Anthony Wayne Area). In my first CSR years I was an ASM. Later while in CSR, I served on the District Commissioner Staff out in Mount Rainier Council. And wouldn't you know it followed me here. I've probably got well over ten years in, but never five in one place. Oh well. I'm in the fourth year here. Had to take some time out to be a Den Leader, Cubmaster, etc.

I digress - Back to the hypothetical. When discussion dies down (assuming it goes), I plan to post my own observations on the problem (about 12k). When I do, let me know what you think and whether they were useful. In training I've always thought it best to stimulate with hypotheticals and then follow with "solutions" that prompted the construction of the hypothetical.

**Yours in Scouting, Michael F. Bowman, a/k/a Professor Beaver
Deputy District Commissioner Exploring, GW Dist., NCAC, BSA
Speaking only for myself, but with Scouting Spirit . . .**

_____ mfbowman@CAP.GWU.EDU _____

Date: Sun, 31 Jul 1994 10:39:05 EDT
From: Freemason@AOL.COM
Subject: Re: Tough Commissioner Question

Mike,

The commissioner job is my favorite in Scouting: it allows me to play a semi-active role in the program, and I don't have to deal with the kids. This has something to do with my personal temperment, and things I saw in my formative years.

My Dad was a Commissioner, after a stint as Cubmaster, Assistant Scoutmaster and Scoutmaster. His favorite job was Cub Roundtable Commissioner, but he was an ADC, whose role was primarily what would be called District Cub Scout Commissioner in the 1975 parlance. He exposed me to a lot of the "inner workings" of a Commissioner job, even while I was a youth.

After my own time as an Assistant Scoutmaster and College Scouter Reserve (remember that one, folks?), I was a Troop Committee member. I felt that Commissioner would better suit my time allotments to Scouting until my 4 year old son got old enough to be a Tiger Cub. (My 8 year old daughter is in the Brownies, but this GS Council frowns on active roles for male leaders).

I think the scenarios should continue - it's good troubleshooting training for us because of the resources - nationwide - and the experiences of each of us.

I would still like to hear from those Pack and Troop leaders and their experiences with noteworthy Commissioners (see my earlier posting if you can). I think we could learn from those applications as well.

YiS, WWW,

Randy Spradling

Date: Mon, 1 Aug 1994 15:28:20 EDT
From: Freemason@AOL.COM
Subject: Re: Commissioner Jim Advice

Ian,

I think you did a great job of putting together a script of how to handle this situation in a manner that probably fits with your personality, rather than the direct Q&A I would have used (maybe I'll incorporate THAT into my bag of tricks <he,he>).

Seems like whenever we are new at a job, or recently trained, we want to show the world our new skills and show ourselves that we can do well - while at the same time tripping over our own shoelaces which we earlier forgot to tie <g>.

I fully understand there is no real "right" answer - Mike was getting us to THINK of how we would handle this situation if we encountered it. You touched on the points I brought up earlier, in a manner that would allow you, Jim and Ivan ways to save face, if face was in fact worth saving (which is a benefit we must always give, until such time as information to the contrary is revealed - and you pointed ways to find THAT out!).

This "hypothetical" situation has probably occurred with us as participants at one time in each of our Scouting careers, and it doesn't matter which part we played.

The key point I wish to beat on is the seasoned leader with "dated" training credentials. I have encountered Scouters who took their training back in the dark ages of the early '70s, got their training award, and never went back to get updated - "Hey, I've already been through that - there's nothing new I can be taught." Funny, you don't look dead to me - you're still walking... maybe since you're such a veteran, you will help staff the next course & enlighten us with your expertise? You will? Well, here is the course

outline and materials - what do you want to teach? We start at 8:00, can you be there at 7:30, ready to go?

Sometimes they take the bait. You end up getting them there (try to arrange a session for their expertise early in the morning & one late in the day, so they have to attend the whole thing) and maybe something new (to them) will sink in.

Now, this is for those recalcitrant leaders - most of the dedicated leaders go ahead & recycle anyway whenever there is a substantial program change - they value the time among the other adults and realize there are new things to be learned; these are not my target today. I am after getting the old-timers out of some self-destructive habits.

I agree that Jim's concerns should not be brushed off, nor should Ivan be alienated - it may have been the first time in years that a Commissioner has had a rapport with Ivan. However, you pointed out that Troop 666 seems to have something going for it - hey, they seem to have a good advancement program, anyway.

And, I stress that Scout activities do not ALWAYS need to be all advancement (work) with no socialization (play). That makes being in Troop 666 seem like too much work (a dirty four-letter word in every kid's mind), and a "beastly" place to be. I can remember way too many campouts where the only activities were cook, clean pots, fetch fuel and water, and darn little else. A "D&D" weekend, if planned, is an excellent idea - as long as that is not the only thing happening at all the campouts.

The trouble we have is getting troops out to district functions - especially one of "my" units. That will be a topic I may bring to the floor once I get some more background information.

YiS, WWW,

Randy Spradling

ADC, Treasure Coast District, Gulfstream Council

(...and a good old owl too...)

Date: Mon, 1 Aug 1994 08:13:27 MST7MDT
From: Wes Mays <WMAYS@ALB.ASCTMD.COM>
Organization: AMTECH Systems Corporation
Subject: Re: Tough Comm. Question

Professor Beaver (Michael Bowman) wrote: (hypothetically)

> Here's a tough one: You are an ADC. Your bright new Unit
> Commissioner, Jumpin' Jim has spent months developing a degree of
> rapport with Ivan "Independent Ivan" Doitmyway, the Scoutmaster of
> an old large troop. Jim tells you that he's really becoming
> successful at hearing what goes on and is a little more than
> distressed. At the last campout he heard that young
> Scouts were severely hazed (covered with peanut butter and moss,
scared by
> costumed invaders in the camp, etc) and that the only activity
> besides camping and cooking was dungeons and dragons, which
> started Friday and ran through Sunday.

The key phrase here is that "Jim" HEARD that things are going on. The worst thing that a Commissioner can do is create a stink because of rumor or innuendo. As his ADC, make sure that "Jim" has the facts before you or anyone does anything else. Since "Jim" has established some good rapport with Ivan, a quite little talk (fact finding) might be order. It must be handled very delicately so that Ivan doesn't get apprehensive.

> None of the Scouts worked on ranks, unless their father
> was an ASM or at the Campout. Jumpin' Jim can barely contain
> himself, he thinks the SM should be fired, etc. Despite all of
> this, you know that the troop produces three to five Eagle Scouts a
> year and has pretty steady advancement overall. You also know that
> the SM has been through training and has the Training Award,
> Scouter's Key and Scoutmaster's Award of Merit.

This doesn't concern me a whole lot. Since the track record of the troop is pretty good, it wouldn't be advisable to start bringing up camp out activities with Ivan. The situation SHOULD be monitored; if the advancement record starts to show a decrease, then it would be appropriate to discuss the situation with Ivan.

If "Jim" is able to substantiate the original hazing story, then "YES" action would be required. From a YPP standpoint, this is

a fairly serious occurrence. Something must be done before another incident can happen again. I would suggest that the first response is to talk to Ivan, but only if Jim has good communication with him. Second fall back is to talk to the troop committee; however, but that can be dangerous because they will/should support the Scoutmaster. A call to the chartered org. rep. would be appropriate if the other two items do not work or are not possible.

Personal Note:

Actually had something happen similar to this; except it was the Scoutmaster who was accused of yelling, screaming, and verbally abusing the boys on a campout. Lost a bunch of boys to other troops, lost the Scoutmaster (Woodbadge trained), nearly lost the chartered organization. None of the accusations were ever "proven". It actually was the parents who started the accusations; one was pastor of the chartered organization. Was not fun at all. I was not involved since I was not the Commissioner for the unit. I am a member of the church, therefore, I found out about it during discussions on whether to renew the charter or not.

YIS

Wes Mays (wmays@alb.asctmd.com)

Date: Tue, 2 Aug 1994 01:01:38 -0400 (EDT)
From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@cap.gwu.edu>
Subject: Re: Tough Comm. Question
To: Wes Mays <WMAYS@ALB.ASCTMD.COM>

Wes,

I appreciated your contribution. You raised a lot of good points. I too had a similar experience, but it turned out a little different. The facts were substantiated that youth were hazing other youth and that the leaders turned their backs on the problem. The troop had other problems too numerous to list here. The Committee Chairperson was receptive and took action. The SM retired and three ASMs were fired. The new SM and remaining ASMs were quickly run through YPP and Scoutmaster Fundamentals.

The troop changed a lot of policies and began attending District and Council events. They went from one Eagle a year to five a year. Instead of losing members, they are now growing. Also had an experience where everything grew out of proportion and the Chartered Organization backed the SM.

However, in the hypothetical I chose not to recreate those scenarios and thought it might be better to leave a lot of open areas for questions. And I liked your fixes.

Later on I'll post to the list my own observations that I wrote before discussion was launched. Let me know what you think of them. Also, there have been requests for more hypotheticals for discussion later on. Would you be interested?

Yours in Scouting, Michael F. Bowman, a/k/a Professor Beaver
Deputy District Commissioner Exploring, GW Dist., NCAC, BSA
Speaking only for myself, but with Scouting Spirit . . .

_____ mfbowman@CAP.GWU.EDU _____

Date: Mon, 1 Aug 1994 09:25:09 -0500
From: "Brian L. Davis" <brian@COR.GOV>
Subject: Re: Distinguished Commissioner A

Regarding the "Jumpin Jim"/Hazing question, let me give a Youth Protection viewpoint.

Hazing is a **very** serious problem. It is strictly forbidden in all Scout programs, and should be considered a form of child abuse under our current regulations.

"Hazing Prohibited. Physical hazing and initiations are prohibited and may not be included as part of any Scouting activity"
-Youth Protection Guidelines c1993

In all cases where a violation of the youth protection rules might result in a physical, sexual, or emotional injury to a child, the issue must be reported to the Scout Executive. Sorry, but this issue is **not** one which can be handled by **any** level of the District Leadership.

It is a fact, that many instances of sexual abuse which occur in Scout programs originate in some form of initiation ceremony. And yes, boys can and do sexually abuse other boys. This instance may have involved only emotional abuse (and a **very** serious rules infraction), but the Youth Protection Guidelines are fairly adamant - This isn't something to be handled by the Volunteers.

So, the correct answer to the "Jumpin Jim" dilemma, is to immediately report the hazing to the Scout Executive, and then butt out.

used to be an Eagle...

Brian Davis
Youth Protection Chairman
North Trails

Date: Mon, 1 Aug 1994 16:10:50 -0500
From: George Huffman <HUFFMAN_GEORGE_W@LILLY.COM>
Subject: Re: Commissioner Jim Advice

Randy reminded me of a College of Commissioner Science class I had a number of years ago on "Lifesaving for Units" which was (and maybe still is in some parts of the country) a session on keeping a unit from going under. Anyhow, we had one of the oldtimers teach the course - one who knew it all and didn't need to be trained. As we filed in the class and sat down, he stood up and announced that he wasn't that familiar with water safety and couldn't imagine why they had asked him to teach this session, but he sure would have a go at it....

So much for asking a "know it all" to serve as an instructor. We now have a course in the Commissioner training called "Bringing the Dead Back to Life" which of course is concerned with dropped units. I wonder how he would teach this course!

George

From: HUFFMAN GEORGE W (MCVAX0::RX15559)

To: FOREIGN TRANSPORT ADDRESSEE (MCDEV1::IN%"SCOUTS-L%TCUBVM.BITNET@PUCC.Princeton.EDU")

Date: Mon, 1 Aug 1994 08:35:15 -0500
From: "Brian L. Davis" <brian@COR.GOV>
Subject: Re: Distinguished Commissioner A

Wes Mays writes:

->
->>From what I've been able to gather through reading literature, the
->"old" Commissioner role was to ride herd on "his" Scoutmasters in his
->area. This created animosity to say the least. By the way, this
->ended 40(?) years ago. I think that we have a history that we are
->still striving to overcome.
->
->I've had excellent relationships with some of my unit leaders and
->poor relationships with others. Most of my good relationships have
->been with most of the Cubmasters and the younger Scoutmasters (I'm
->35 years young.) I find that inexperienced Scouters are the most
->receptive; while the "old" hands feel that they don't need or want
->outside interference.
->

I think most of the problems you are experiencing with older hands could be attributed to another cause entirely. One of the most common comments

I hear about Commissioners in forums like this, and locally as well, is that they simply don't do much, even when called. My personal experience

with them is the same: You just don't see much of them.

I have also noticed a perception, probably somewhat justified in many districts, that commissioners are frequently people too lazy to actually

work with a Unit, that want to continue association with Scouting. When a DE or District worker gets presented with such a person, they stick them in a position where they can't hurt much - Commissioner.

Another perception among old-timers, is that many persons currently working as commissioners have very little actual experience on the front lines

of Scouting. I think this is also somewhat justified in many cases, since I've personally seen people who have 2 or 3 years tender in a Cub Pack go to Commissioner college, and suddenly turn up wanting to "advise" Troops

on how to operate. Basically, they show up and read from the rules and PR material as though it were their own wisdom. Such persons warrant very little

attention. Can you blame experienced Scoutmasters for ignoring such them?

Here's my personal opinion: It should be a requirement of all prospective commissioners that they have a minimum tenure as Scoutmaster or Cubmaster before consideration for service. Will there be as many commissioners? No. Do we need scads of them? No. Let the Units do their own re-chartering, and save the Commissioners for problem resolution, and ceremonies, and so forth. IMHO, I'm just not interested in the advice of someone who hasn't been there, and done that. I can read the book without help.

On the other hand, I would love to have an experienced hand to seek advice from sometimes (Of course *I* have Scouts-L the "Super Commisioner") or to come mediate a problem between individuals (neutral party). Unfortunately, I've never had such a person as commisioner.

Used to be an Eagle...

--

| Brian L. Davis
| Richardson, Tx

Internet: brian@cor.gov |
CompuServe: 72600,2721 |

Date: Wed, 3 Aug 1994 00:51:31 -0400 (EDT)
From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@cap.gwu.edu>
Subject: Re: Advice to Commissioner " Jim " (Long)
To: Ian Ford <ianford@dircon.co.uk>

Ian,

I hesitate to be too judgmental on the D&D issue, because I don't share an interest in playing and have not had the experience. What I have observed is that the players pick an identity and live it through the game. Probably pretty harmless, so long as the player has the maturity to distinguish between reality and fantasy. We had a case in the States where adults in corporate life failed to make distinctions and where one player retaliated on the job for things in the game. Sort of got my attention. Then we also have some D&D cultists, who are also into black magic, etc. and work that into their version of the game. While the basic game can be fun and probably no real harm, there are those who (as in life) get things mixed and confused. I've had parents swear that the game was a form of devil worship and others praise its motivating effect on developing imagination and the capacity for mental exercise. Like so many things its not a simple question, but an interesting conundrum.

In some of our programs we use fantasy to make things more exciting.
BSA

has had pirates as Cub Scout theme with activities and costumes to match. Is that any worse or better? They also figured out that it was sending mixed messages and haven't repeated it.

I guess it comes down to the fact that we have to have a sense of humor, some tolerance and open minds, while watching to see that things stay in reasonable bounds and that nobody gets hurt.

Yours in Scouting, Michael F. Bowman, a/k/a Professor Beaver
Deputy District Commissioner Exploring, GW Dist., NCAC, BSA
Speaking only for myself, but with Scouting Spirit . . .

_____ mfbowman@CAP.GWU.EDU _____

Date: Wed, 3 Aug 1994 01:03:21 -0400 (EDT)
From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@cap.gwu.edu>
Subject: Re: Distinguished Commissioner A
To: "Brian L. Davis" <brian@COR.GOV>

Brian,

Appreciated your comments -- and valid they are. If in fact an instance of abuse is found to have happened, then the Scout Executive must be informed. I have had the unfortunate experience of reporting before and also the experience of having the MPs arrest a Scouter who assaulted a Scout on a military reservation.

On the other hand I've seen over-reaction in spades. A DE wanted to bounce an SM on YPP grounds for conducting animal sacrifices. Turned out he used a blue bug zapper and the kids feigned over interest in watching it zap insects every time he used it. They called it watching the SM's animal sacrifices in jest.

In the hypothetical, I left open many possibilities and was scarce on the facts to leave room for a variety of analyses with the idea that each of us could fill in facts and suggest an action.

After a few more days, I'll also join in and offer my observations on some of the possibilities. I'd be interested in your comments on those as well.

Some of the List members have asked for more hypotheticals in the future. Would that be useful to you?

**Yours in Scouting, Michael F. Bowman, a/k/a Professor Beaver
Deputy District Commissioner Exploring, GW Dist., NCAC, BSA
Speaking only for myself, but with Scouting Spirit . . .**

_____ mfbowman@CAP.GWU.EDU _____

Date: Wed, 3 Aug 1994 01:12:51 -0400 (EDT)
From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@cap.gwu.edu>
Subject: Re: Commissioner Jim Advice
To: George Huffman <HUFFMAN_GEORGE_W@LILLY.COM>

George,

Valid point. While it might work with an intelligent old-timer, there are always a few with little imagination and no initiative to find out more. I sometimes recommend bringing in an old-timer to training, but not without screening. The results have been mixed even then.

In a few more days I'll offer some observations on the problem. Would appreciate your comments on them. Some on the list have asked for more of these sort of hypotheticals. Would you be interested?

**Yours in Scouting, Michael F. Bowman, a/k/a Professor Beaver
Deputy District Commissioner Exploring, GW Dist., NCAC, BSA
Speaking only for myself, but with Scouting Spirit . . .
_____ mfbowman@CAP.GWU.EDU _____**

Date: Wed, 3 Aug 1994 01:20:22 -0400 (EDT)
From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@cap.gwu.edu>
Subject: Re: Distinguished Commissioner A
To: "Brian L. Davis" <brian@COR.GOV>

Brian,

I've seen it go both ways depending on the Council and the District. Some are very good at recruiting Commissioners from experienced Advisors, Cubmasters, and Scoutmasters, who know the problems and who can give a lot of meaningful assistance. I've also seen a few, who couldn't have run a troop meeting. Such is the mixed bag you get with volunteers.

In our District we have about 200 units with a Commissioner for every 2.4 units, 13 ADCs, 6 DDCs and the DC. About 85% of these have been a unit leader for 3 or more years and generally work with the type of unit they have had experience. It really works well. Recruiting, however, takes a lot of commitment to get the right people.

For what its worth, I'm one of those experienced types. Spent nine years on camp staffs (2 as Commissioner, 2 as Program Director), was an ASM for 3 years, Den Leader, Den Leader Coach, Cubmaster, Roundtable Staff, Trainer, etc. And now while serving as a Commissioner, I'm still on my son's troop committee, counseling merit badges, sitting on boards of review, and more. And from this I can say that it would be terribly awkward giving advice to season vets without that background.

Yours in Scouting, Michael F. Bowman, a/k/a Professor Beaver
Deputy District Commissioner Exploring, GW Dist., NCAC, BSA
Speaking only for myself, but with Scouting Spirit . . .
_____ mfbowman@CAP.GWU.EDU _____

Date: Wed, 3 Aug 1994 22:36:38 -0400 (EDT)
From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@cap.gwu.edu>
Subject: Re: Commissioner Jim Advice
To: HUFFMAN_GEORGE_W@Lilly.com

George,

Thanks! Let me take you up on the offer. First, I'll send a Commissioner Jim set of observations out either tomorrow or Friday. Your comments on the list would be much appreciated just to keep balance. Second, I'm willing to set up another hypothetical and mulling over ideas. Any major commissioner issues where you're at that would be fertile ground? I'm thinking of perhaps a hypothetical involving the death of an old timer (35 years plus as SM and the unit's sudden deterioration. Your training on breathing new life into a unit might be a good source of ideas to help build on this.

**Yours in Scouting, Michael F. Bowman, a/k/a Professor Beaver
Deputy District Commissioner Exploring, GW Dist., NCAC, BSA
Speaking only for myself, but with Scouting Spirit . . .
_____ mfbowman@CAP.GWU.EDU _____**

Date: Thu, 4 Aug 1994 10:11:38 EDT
From: Freemason@AOL.COM
Subject: Re: Distinguished Commissioner

On Mon, 1 Aug 1994 09:25:09 -0500 "Brian L. Davis" <brian@COR.GOV>
wrote:

>Regarding the "Jumpin Jim"/Hazing question, let me give a Youth
>Protection
viewpoint.

>Hazing is a **very** serious problem. It is strictly forbidden in all
>Scout programs, and should be considered a form of child abuse >under
our
current regulations.

>"Hazing Prohibited. Physical hazing and initiations are prohibited >and
may
not be included as part of any Scouting activity"
>-Youth Protection Guidelines c1993

>In all cases where a violation of the youth protection rules might >result
in a physical, sexual, or emotional injury to a child, the issue >must be
reported to the Scout Executive. Sorry, but this issue is >**not** one which
can be handled by **any** level of the District >Leadership.

>It is a fact, that many instances of sexual abuse which occur in
>Scout programs originate in some form of initiation ceremony. And >yes,
boys can and do sexually abuse other boys. This instance >may have
involved
only emotional abuse (and a **very** serious rules >infraction), but the
Youth
Protection Guidelines are fairly adamant - >This isn't something to be
handled by the Volunteers.

>So, the correct answer to the "Jumpin Jim" dilemma, is to >immediately
report the hazing to the Scout Executive, and
>then butt out.

>used to be an Eagle...

>Brian Davis
>Youth Protection Chairman

>North Trails

Nice to see that something in this program is so black-and-white.

Unfortunately, the program surgically removes the cancer once it is malignant, is an effective vaccination, and seems to cure the symptoms, but, in this case, does not cure the disease in the carrier, Ivan. District-level handling, in the form of discussion and training should be helpful in deterring the spread of the problem via Ivan before it gets out of control.

Given the "presumed guilty" stance on YPP, I would be inclined to direct Jim

to put this one back on the persons doing the complaining, once he was certain who they were. If the boys are unhappy, Jim should tell them to discuss the issue with their parents. If the parents are unhappy, then give them the Scout Executive's name and number. In no way should Jim, or his

ADC, be allowing the parents to abdicate their responsibilities to their boys - that is not in a commissioner's job description.

Having said that, I think that Jim should also give a follow-up call to the Scout Executive, with names and numbers, to make sure that the complaint has been initiated.

Once that was done, then Ivan still needs a debriefing to keep it from happening again. Chalk this one up to training - he needs to have this no hazing policy reinforced, even if it means recycling him through the training. Ignorance is no excuse on YPP, but by reminding him of his obligations as a leader, then the issue becomes wilful misconduct if he continues to let the incidents happen. In either case, he is on his own if he lets it continue - BSA will drum him out, and he will be liable for all subsequent civil penalties, i.e., he is on his own from a tort liability standpoint.

Then, as ADC, I would then look for another job for Jumpin' Jim, because his effectiveness as a Unit Commissioner would now be compromised: he would be labelled a meddler and enforcer, not a valuable resource, and no other unit would trust him, once word got out about Ivan's demise as scoutmaster due to a hazing incident (and word WILL get out!). This is called punishing the

innocent. I want to point this out, because I have seen good people rendered totally ineffective over less.

Maybe assigning him to units with younger leaders, rather than veterans, will salvage him as a unit commissioner: they won't have a mindset, they will be more receptive to his help, and he will have a chance to establish his credibility before the rumor mill catches up with him. Then maybe, in about ten years, no one will remember Jim's involvement in resolving a problem of this magnitude.

YiS, WWW,

Randy Spradling
Assitant District Commissioner
Treasure Coast District
Gulf Stream Council

Date: Thu, 4 Aug 1994 01:03:26 -0400 (EDT)
From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@cap.gwu.edu>
Subject: Observations on the Jumpin' Jim Commissioner Hypothetical

A few have requested my thoughts on the hypothetical involving Jumpin' Jim.

I put together my thoughts last Sunday after Randy started the discussion, but before the rest of the responses started rolling in. There were a lot of great ideas and thoughts, that I haven't included here. These are just the things I was thinking of when I raised the question. To those who contributed, my thanks -- I know I learned a few things. Anyway, apologizing in advance for length, here is what I came up with:

- 1. As the ADC in this situation, you have probably realized that you need to find out a lot more before you or the Commissioner's Staff can be effective in this situation.**
- 2. Your first problem is to advise Jumpin' Jim on what to do immediately or he'll probably figure out something on his own and it may be guns ablazing (to borrow from Freemason). You can make him part of the crisis team in this situation by laying out your plan of approach and asking him to help you in the fact-finding with specific areas (maybe limited) before action takes place.**
- 3. As ADC you can tell Jumpin' Jim that your plan of action is something like this (more comment on the hypothetical after this):**
 - a. Fact-finding - answer as many of the important questions as you can.**
 - 1] Jumpin' Jim can go through the records with the District Training Chairman to see which troop leaders received what training at what time. This should probably be couched in terms of reviewing all units that Jumpin' Jim has to avoid singling out the old troop. Or it can be a special project to review all of the units in your service area with Jim leading the charge. Won't hurt to keep it general and non-specific and can avoid rumors.**
 - 2] Jumpin' Jim can continue to go to the next meeting or two and listen and ask a few questions that are not accusatory, if he can work them into conversation (this is a judgment call); e.g., he can find out which leaders were on the campout, where it was,**

dates, and get a feel for what boys were there.

3] You may want to check around to see who knows the SM or any of the ASMs and see what the grapevine says. This needs to be pretty subtle, because you don't want to signal that the Commissioner Staff is on the hunt - its not.

- b. Team review - That's you the ADC, your Unit Commissioner, the District Commissioner and the Senior District Executive (especially if you suspect that YPP issues are involved). Review the facts known and not known. Tell Jumpin' Jim that the team will develop a team plan at this point with specific responsibilities for each player and reassure him that you are not going to overstep into his relationship with the troop (you don't want to anyway).
- c. Actions decided by the team. Suggest to Jumpin' Jim that these actions may include more questions that he will have to ask, contact with the SM, contact with the Committee Chairman, or the Chartered Organization. However, stress that the questions will need to be pursued in a definite order. It's a good time to point out that, if we get to far ahead of ourselves when can polarize the situation and find that the Chartered Organization is backing the SM until death.

4. Now here are some of the questions that I thought needed to be answered

when I designed the hypothetical (and I know that there were a lot of other

good questions raised in discussion that should be added):

- a. Who were the adult leaders and other adults present at the Campout?
- b. Was the Scoutmaster there?
- c. Who was in charge and when?
- d. Were any of the other leaders present trained?
- e. When was the last training for each?
- f. Have any of those leaders attended YPP Training, if so when?
- g. When did this Campout take place? (Was it recently or a long time ago?)
- h. Where was the Campout?
- i. Was it within 50 miles of the troop's meeting place?
- j. If not, did the troop get a tour permit? (If they goofed here, their liability could have been much greater, if something went wrong or had gone wrong - this gets attention)
- k. What did the Scouts plan as the activities for the Campout?

- l. Who approved the Patrol Leader's Council's plan for the campout?
- m. Did the PLC's plan include Dungeons and Dragons (D&D) and/or the hazing?
- n. Regarding D&D - its popular among early teens as a game - what do you know about it? Does it teach any Scouting values? Is it appropriate for a Scout activity? (You may need to use your resources to find out more, before you are ready to take this on)
- o. Did any of the alleged events take place?
- p. What were the circumstances?
- q. If they did take place, which adults, if any knew in advance?
- r. Did any of the adults know about these activities when they were taking place?
- s. If they did, what did they do?
- t. Was their action an appropriate resolution (meaning you really don't need to add more)?
- u. Is the adult leadership now aware of the problems, if the allegations are true?
- v. What has the adult leadership done since the campout?
- w. Is their post-campout action an appropriate response?
- x. Has the SPL or any youth leader taken action (I've seen an SPL take a whole troop to task after an event for poor conduct without the SM asking)?
- y. Was any Scout hurt?
- z. Was any Scout molested by an older Scout?
- aa. What has been done?
- ab. What still needs to be done?

5. Depending on the answers to these questions, you as the ADC will have to decide who needs to be involved at what stage in the resolution of any problems discovered. You may decide that unit has discovered its problem and addressed it appropriately. If so, it wouldn't hurt to just to run it by your District Commissioner and District Executive, just in case something else comes of the events that you didn't know about (nobody likes surprises!).

6. Assuming that there are problems that need to be resolved, as the ADC you probably will want to involve both your District Commissioner and District Executive in the process. However, you don't want to get too many folks involved. The more people involved, the more who talk, the more the rumors and pretty soon you no longer have any control and damage

is being done. Back to the main point here. You want your District Commissioner involved to give you support, advice and act as a sounding board. He will want to be involved, because he's responsible for every unit's health. Because he will not in all probability have any relation to the unit, he can give impartial and independent advice and help make sure that emotion doesn't get ahead of reason. Because of the potential for YPP problems and perhaps other policy issues, the DE needs to be aware

of what you are doing. The worst thing that could happen is for you to develop a great plan only to find out that a distraught parent has called the DE and that he's already confronting the Chartered Organization's Institutional Head, the Committee Chairperson or SM, based on a very one-sided view (So much for all your hopes to do it right). Instead show him that you have a good grasp on the situation and that you are going to help him get to the bottom of the situation. There are things he can do to make your job easier too; e.g. records in the Council Office, information on prior complaints (if any), ideas, knowledge about Council, Regional and National policies, etc. In most cases the DE will be relieved that you are going to do some of the tough stuff and happy to have input. (We all know that no DE, DC, ADC or UC is perfect and that some may want to jump the gun, but this is going to happen anyway, so why

not do your best to cut down on the chances or minimize the risk by taking the team approach? Once folks acknowledge team membership they're less likely to take independent action.)

7. Now that you have a team assembled and know what questions to ask, what

are you really going to do? Situations like this always require a lot of judgment and each of us sees things a little differently. So please realize that there are many right answers depending on the circumstances. As a minimum I think we can probably all agree that the situation needs to

be followed to a conclusion. If we can get Jumpin' Jim to understand that we don't fire SM's or any other leader and can get him to calm down, he can be our best asset. He can be coached to have a very private conversation with the SM. He can use several approaches. He could start by alluding to a problem similar in nature that he's heard about elsewhere. This approach has the advantage of not being accusatory and allowing the SM to raise his own questions. However, it has the danger of being too thin, if the SM already knows about the problem and suspects that this is the issue. Another approach is ask the SM for advice on what

the UC can or should do, given that he has been presented with some allegations that he's not sure about. This allows the SM to explain misunderstandings, if there were any. Suppose for example that the Scouts

were trying to do a Nickolodean style event and all the new guys in the new patrol lost the tug of war and got drug through peanut butter and moss

- no hazing, just "clean" fun. It wouldn't do to have made an accusation only to have the peanut butter on your own face. Pardon the unforgiveable

pun. On the other hand Ivan may reluctantly welcome the opportunity to figure out the mess (especially, if he wasn't on site) or at least to tell you that he has it under control (we can decide later if it is under control). And there's always confrontation. Not usually the recommended approach, but if we end up with pretty strong evidence that something is really amiss and get a wire brush from the SM, we may have no other choice. The downside is that we know will also have to involve the Committee Chairperson and/or Chartered Organization. This could lead to a stalemate, if not carefully handled.

8. Now what? Well, if we decide the problem is still real, we need to figure out what needs to be done. Here it pays to demonstratively place trust in the real decision makers. We can let the Committee Chairperson know what we know and what our concerns are and ask for him/her to address

the issue. A good many Chairpersons will do just that and pretty fairly too. After all their son's welfare is at stake too.

9. Suppose we get the wire-brush from the Chairperson? There's always the Chartered Organization, but this is a step that demands extreme caution. The Chartered Organization wouldn't have approved the SM, ASMs, etc., if it didn't have a lot of confidence in them. Before you go this far, you'd better really have your facts straight and not have a handful of allegations that are unsupported. If you really don't have a strong case, you could end up alienating them and they could decide its too much trouble to charter a unit. The boys get hurt and the problem still isn't solved.

10. Now its clear after walking through these possibilities that maybe another approach would be to focus on making sure that all of the leaders have current training including YPP. It might also be useful to invite the SM to participate in SM Fundamentals instead of taking him on. You

know the old wisdom that nothing teaches like having to teach others.

11. One other thing that I have deliberately left until last, because the facts were not meant to directly suggest a true YPP problem is the issue of YPP. If we find that the information gives us reason to believe that abuse or molestation did occur in the hazing, etc., at any point in the resolution process, then it is mandatory for the Scout Executive to be informed and he in turn must contact appropriate youth protection agencies

in the jurisdiction(s) involved. If this is so, it will have a profound effect on how the matter is resolved. >>From that point on, the Scout Executive will have to run the show. There is no way that you want to interfere in any State investigation or inquiry. In fact, if you do, you may be subject to criminal sanctions. Once the flag goes up on this issue, the Commissioner Staff will still have a role to play in assessing leadership, training, etc., and in working with the Chartered Organization and Committee to help keep the troop on its feet, but this will have to be coordinated with the Scout Executive.

12. Remember that this was a hypothetical situation and solution. Each situation you confront in the Commissioner's Service will be unique. And while there are some things that we can learn from an exercise, each situation also will require judgment. And finally, I must also remind the list that in formulating the hypothetical and the hypothetical solution(s), I am not speaking on behalf of the BSA and am simply offering my own observations for the purposes of discussion. In a real situation, I would be the first to strongly urge you to discuss the matter with your District Commissioner and District Executive and to obtain any professional advice warranted.

I appreciate your contributions, ideas and thoughts on this case. I think that we all profit from the many different viewpoints on the SCOUTS-L List and this is no exception.

Disclaimer: "Anyone who takes seriously anything I say shouldn't be allowed on the network in the first place."



Date: Thu, 4 Aug 1994 11:23:15 EST
From: Nathan Brindle <NBRINDLE%INDYCMS.BITNET@PUCC.PRINCETON.EDU>
Organization: IUPUI Student Activities Office (317) 274-3931
Subject: Re: In Defense of Commissioners

Wendy makes a good point--but then there is a perception on the part of the troop that <any> district person (outsider) is just there to spy and meddle. I was the commissioner for a particular unit that had just elected a new SPL, who was getting no leadership help from the SM.

During

lulls in the action at one meeting, I made two suggestions to the SPL in private that were intended to calm him down and give him the help he needed

rather than let him flounder. I was subsequently accused of trying to "take over the meeting." Needless to say, I did <not> try to take over this meeting. But I certainly won't ever try to help out in real time again.

I'm sure what I did could have been construed as "meddling," but like they say, "ya hadda be there." (Plus the fact that the person who leveled the accusation is the guy I "kicked out" of OA back in May, who wasn't even registered with the troop in the first place. So you've also got to consider the source. :) (Also BTW, as it turns out, since the guy wasn't registered, he wasn't eligible for OA anyway. So I didn't <really> kick him out.)

I <will> say this--effective commissioner service means that you as a commissioner are a physician concerned with unit health. That means you must visit the units but not interfere with their ongoing operations. You are free to make suggestions in a TACTFUL way that could improve the way the unit does things (if you note no planned program, introduce the concept of program planning forms--if you note few adults trained, gently but firmly push Fast Start and appropriate other training--if you note little knowledge of district goings-on, invite the leader to Roundtable--etc.). However, this <can> make you <look> like the good ol' boy in his red jacket drinking coffee in the back of the room. If you are an effective commissioner, that's often the way it <does> look. After all, a unit that you are keeping healthy usually doesn't even think about the fact that the commissioner is responsible for its health. "Commissioner? We don't need no steenking commissioner!" But let something go wrong and that changes to "where's that commissioner?"

(He's in the back of the room drinking coffee and bringing you the stuff you need, that's where...:)

Nathan C. Brindle, Student Activities Office, IUPU-Indianapolis
Let's see...North Star District, Crossroads of America Council: ASM Troop
18,
District Committee Member, Assistant District Commissioner, OA Chapter
Advisor
I used to be an Eagle (C-28W-93), and Bachelor of Commissioner Science,
1994
Disclaimer: My opinions are my own. Indiana University can speak for
itself.

Date: Thu, 4 Aug 1994 10:11:12 EDT
From: Freemason@AOL.COM
Subject: Re: In Defense of Commissioners

On Wed, 3 Aug 1994 10:04:06 -0400 Wendy Theriault
<wendyt@MIGHTY.RIV.EDU> wrote:

> One of the ongoing problems that commissioners have is fighting
> the image of the good ol' boy standing in the back of the meeting
> room in his red jacket and drinking coffee.

Hey, I resemble that remark! :) Seriously - I spend most of my coffee-
drinking time visiting my units at camporees, where the coffee flows
freely
and the leaders are most relaxed. It's amazing what you'll hear at a
camporee
during a visit, while at the same time the kids are participating in their
contests.

> True, there are still some of those left as well as the meddlers and
> the invisible commissioners.

I have found that meddling is in the eye of the beholder. In my
experience,
the leader who feels that the commissioner is a meddler, or worse yet, a
spy for the district, is either going through paranoid delusions or he/she
really has something to hide, in the form of substantial deviations from the
program, or both.

I don't always show up to meetings on a regular basis, but I do get in touch
with the leaders of my units, to see how things are going. Most of my unit
committees meet on nights when I have other conflicts (yes, I do have a
life
outside of scouting), so the committees may not know I exist - but the top
leaders do, and THEY are the ones who affect the unit operations most
profoundly.

>What's needed here, just as in any other adult position in scouting, is
proper
> screening before recruitment and immediate and continual training. The
> district must also be committed to quality service to units, not just
> filling up a roster with names.

I would agree with you, Wendy, because most of the districts with which I have been personally involved have been interested in quality service. I have also been in districts which consisted of those same good ole boys (God love them all) who wish to maintain the status quo - them on top, keep the numbers, and to h*** with the program.

I got into a long discussion with our council's Field Director (who was acting as our DE) regarding the demise of an existing troop. He wanted to keep it going, although it met one block down from, and on the same night as, a more viable unit (BTW it was one of my units). It had five on the charter, but only one boy stayed in - the other four succumbed to peer pressure. He did not want to pull the plug on the unit, although the top leader did not want to do anything about recruitment.

We have since been assigned a new DE (Xfer from another district), and I discussed reorganizing the troop. He said "why bother - it was an ineffective unit anyway." I guess that even some professionals can be willing to sacrifice unit quantity for quality - but it was a real surprise to me.

>A truly good commissioner will honestly be a friend to the units they serve..
>..not a spy, not an enforcer...but a valued resource and cheerleader for the unit.

I spend more time being a cheerleader than anything else - the leaders seem afraid to ask for information or assistance from their commissioners - maybe it's a fear that they have unwittingly been doing something wrong, and don't want to be caught up

in it.

Some of the good points - newer leaders want the info I can provide (or get for them if I don't know for sure), and it feels good to help. I have sat in on mock Eagle Boards to help the leader prepare the boys for that interview. I have been to courts of honor and cheered the boys on in their advancements. These are things that make commissioner service worthwhile.

On the other hand, I have been through crisis management (one of these days I'll rehash my own non-hypothetical situation for the readers) and sometimes even been successful in resolving the situation. But - no matter what advice, or directed guidance, or whatever, I give to the units, the buck stops at the adult leadership for determining whether the advice will be heeded. This is sometimes the hardest point to get across: it is your boys' unit - what are *you*, not what am *I*, going to do about it: that hard decision is *yours*. What do *you* think the answer is? I will not let you pass that buck to me!

This is, IMHBCO, the hardest lesson for a new commissioner to learn - that he/she is not there to ride herd, nor to allow the adults to abdicate their responsibilities to their units, but to be there as an advisor and mediator whenever the need arises.

> Wendy Theriault
> Unit Commissioner, Arrowhead District
> Daniel Webster Council N.H.

Date: Tue, 9 Aug 1994 23:57:16 -0400 (EDT)
From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@cap.gwu.edu>
Subject: Re: Homesick - with a sting in the tail !

Ian,

Reading your Posting on the young Scout, whose father was dying of cancer,

I couldn't help feeling touched by what he have been feeling. It sounds like he may have sensed his father's approaching death, even if he had not yet come to grips with it consciously. It also sounds like he may have just then picked up on some of the cues from his parting from his family that his father's words to him, a special hug, or something of that nature was the last. And I wonder whether he may already have started the grieving process.

We know that we want to try and respect the family's wishes here, but this situation could cause a lot of damage. Had a cousin who was not informed of her grandfather's passing and funeral, because the family didn't want her to be upset during college final exams week. The resentment that followed was long in healing. There's also the danger of transference; e.g. that the Scout wouldn't want to go camping with the Troop because of what happened when he was gone before.

I would be inclined to level a bit with his Patrol Leader and tell the PL that the Scout was in the midst of some tough times with his dad being pretty sick and that the Scout needed some space and understanding. Tell him that you'll have a chat with the Scout and afterwards you'd like him and the other Scouts to not say anything more about the dishwashing and instead on your cue to involve him the day's planned activities. Remind the PL, that if the Scout just doesn't want to join in to just respect his needs and go on about the activities. I might also ask one of the leaders to keep an eye on the Scout in a casual way and to be there when and if needed for the next few minutes.

At the same time, one of those flip-phones or mobile rigs would be handy, because I think I would like to talk a bit more with the family. They should know that the Scout is not unphased by what is going on and be given a chance to reconsider. He may well need the support of his family and they may need to think about giving it.

If they still feel strongly, then the Scout probably could use a strong shoulder indirectly offered. Maybe this is one of those times when it would be good to ask the Scout to join you in a bit of whittling at a bench or log off to the side and start by telling a story or talking about something to get his attention off the dread subject. Then I might work back to say that the PL was a bit worried about him and ask how he was feeling, what he was feeling, and let him talk it out. You may have to start by helping him identify his feelings; e.g. you're usually pretty chipper, but you seem like you feel upset or sad. This is one time where reflective questions or responses are probably best, letting him lead and decide how to respond to his feelings. Not an easy thing by any means.

He may want to talk about his fears of his dad's illness or fears that his dad will die. Listen. Reflect his views back without judgment. Sometimes this will be all that is needed.

And what if he asks questions -- Is my dad going to be okay? I want to go home. I'm afraid . . .? We don't know and its probably best to say so. Maybe answer with a question; e.g., I don't know, but what do you think your dad would want you to do? Help him realize that his dad is proud of him and no doubt is comforted to know that his son is out camping, enjoying learning, etc.

Hopefully, at some point the Scout's spirit will kick in and he'll resolve to be a part of things sensing that its for the best.

If all else fails, you may be put in the awkward position of excusing yourself and then working out with the family a way for a family member to give reassurances or comfort.

I think this quiet reassuring or comforting time is needed, but should not be overdone. At this point I think I would try to get the Scout back involved in the program and cue the patrol. He may or may not participate.

Encourage the patrol on and maybe ask the Scout to help you with some chore or project. You may be in for some listening or just there to give a sense of stability. And if he declines, give him the space he needs and be watchful.

My heart goes out to the lad, I hope that in your real-life experience all turned out as well as it could in the circumstances.

**Yours in Scouting, Michael F. Bowman, a/k/a Professor Beaver
Deputy District Commissioner Exploring, GW Dist., NCAC, BSA
Speaking only for myself, but with Scouting Spirit . . .**

_____ mfbowman@CAP.GWU.EDU _____

Date: Tue, 9 Aug 1994 16:59:57 PDT
From: Rodger Morris <rlm@SUNED1.NSWSES.NAVY.MIL>
Subject: Re: Homesick - with a sting in the tail !
In a somewhat similar case, I told my Scouts:

"He has extremely good reason to be upset. I am not at liberty to tell you more about it at this time. Upon my honor as a Scouter, I will tell you just as soon as I am at liberty to do so. Please help him out this weekend.

Yours in Scouting,

Rodger

Date: Tue, 9 Aug 1994 23:20:10 -0400
From: Bob Sargeant <SARGEANT@CUA.EDU>
Subject: Re: Homesick - with a sting in the tail !

Rodger,

I agree totally with your approach in dealing with the scouts who felt that the scout whose dad was dying. I feel that they have every right to know that there is a good reason for the boy's actions. Your actions told them that you were aware and judged it an appropriate behavior. Your willingness

s
to talk about it later showed your concern for their feelings and that you respected their maturity.

You didn't address the issue of the boy and his feelings. At a point like this, it is important that someone counsel the boy concerning this feelings. An adult, probably yourself needs to show support for the boy. I don't think that I would let him know that I already know, but just that I noticed that something was bothering him. Then let him "spill his gut". Let him do all the talking. He will appreciate the listening hear for the rest of his life.

Yours in scouting, Bob Sargeant, Dist Commissioner, GW Dist NCAC, BSA.
Opinions
are mine, but in the Scouting Spirit. The old fox, Sargeant@cua.edu.

Date: Thu, 11 Aug 1994 01:20:54 BST
From: Ian Ford <ianford@DIRCON.CO.UK>
Subject: Re: Homesick - with a sting in the tail ! The full story.

Thank you to everyone who replied to my posting. That incident certainly made me more aware of just how much responsibility we take on when we take other people's kids away Scouting.

What actually happened was I spoke to our minister, and she agreed to drive down to the camp should it be necessary. I also made aware that the site crew would only give telephone messages to me or another Leader.

I had a quiet chat with Robert , mainly general stuff about Scouts , what his cousins were doing etc. but he didn't seem as though he wanted to open up about his Dad, so obviously I didn't push the issue.

When the washing up incident occurred I played a hunch. I took the P/L on one side and levelled with him. I told him what Robert's aunt had told me and stressed that this was confidential to be discussed with nobody except me. I said that Robert knew his Dad was ill but didn't know just <how> ill. I then asked the P/L to look after Robert and sort out the patrol. I suggested he might roster himself with Robert for cleanup, rather than the younger Scouts.

The P/L was very good - calmly went over and got Robert to join in with what the Patrol was doing. Clearly his lead influenced the other Scouts, and they stopped complaining.

In the event Robert's dad <did> die , but his aunt decided that the news ought to come from the family. I spent an anxious weekend waiting for the phone call and wondering how to break that news to a kid.

When we got back to the church hall Roberts aunt met him. She caught me eye and nodded sadly, then took him to one side and broke the news. The P/L saw

what had happened and quietly asked if it was all over. I said yes, and we both sniffed a bit and pretended we were blowing our noses.

Robert stayed with the troop for another few months and the family moved.

Since his mum didn't drive and they were some way away from public transport

Robert left the troop.

Looking back I wonder if it was fair to put that responsibility on a fourteen year-old Patrol Leader. He was certainly shaken when I told him, and I had not seen him so quiet on camp. But on balance I think my judgement

was correct. He grew up a bit that weekend too. I guess it comes down to knowing your junior leaders and their capabilities. On balance I think that in similar circumstances I would do the same things again.

Ian N Ford

AGSL 25th Greenwich (Our Lady of Grace) Scout Group

London, England

From: "Wes Mays" <WMAYS@alb.asctmd.com>
Organization: AMTECH Systems Corporation
To: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@cap.gwu.edu>
Date: Thu, 11 Aug 1994 09:38:57 MST7MDT
Subject: Re: Tough Comm. Question

Yes! I would love more hypothetical situations...The only trouble is that I tend to spend more time developing solutions than is really good for my professional advancement at work....I've also noticed that we, as a network, tend to take these pretty seriously; I suppose that's good.

...One last parting thought on the YPP end of your situation. I just recently finished a Scoutmastership Fundamentals course as course director. I sat in on the YPP video; we had a district director who is the council's YPP advisor give his two bits' worth. His opinion on your hypothetical situation was to inform the Council Executive. I tend to disagree, but I think that he was voicing official BSA policy better than me. (I hate to see questions raised about someone, for any reason including YPP, based on rumor.)

YIS
Wes Mays <wmays@alb.asctmd.com>

Date: Thu, 11 Aug 1994 22:53:23 -0400 (EDT)
From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@cap.gwu.edu>
Subject: Re: Tough Comm. Question
To: Wes Mays <WMAYS@alb.asctmd.com>

Wes,

I think we all hate to act on rumor or inuendo, its just not responsible and runs against the teachings of most religious ethics; e.g. bearing false witness. And although we abhor it, there are times when reasonable belief must be acted upon. Here I think it would have been much to premature.

Glad you enjoyed the hypothetical. I'm cooking up another one and will post it soon.

Ain't it a shame that jobs get in the way of really good stuff like Scouting.

Yours in Scouting, Michael F. Bowman, a/k/a Professor Beaver
Deputy District Commissioner Exploring, GW Dist., NCAC, BSA
Speaking only for myself, but with Scouting Spirit . . .
_____ mfbowman@CAP.GWU.EDU _____

Date: Fri, 12 Aug 1994 16:55:47 MST7MDT
From: Wes Mays <WMAYS@ALB.ASCTMD.COM>
Subject: Problems in Commish land...

Here's a situation for Commissioners and any other interested parties. What would you do if:

You are an ADC and have recruited an old friend of yours to be a unit commissioner. You both earned your Eagle Scout awards in the same troop 20 years before. You've known "Bill" for 25+ years. He is married and has an 18 month old daughter.

You hear from other Scouters (whom you know and trust) in your area that "Bill" is getting extremely friendly with some of the female Cub Scouters, who incidentally, are single parents.

You discretely ask "Bill" if everything is OK and he enthusiastically says that everything is fine; in fact, he is enjoying Scouting very much. He says he is sorry that he left the program after high school.

His record as a Commissioner is OK. He has attended Basic Commissioner training and makes the majority of the Commissioner staff meetings. He is talking about joining a local Boy Scout troop as an ASM.

Food for thought....

YIS

Wes Mays

<wmays.alb.asctmd.com>

From mfbowman Fri Aug 12 22:58:14 1994
Date: Fri, 12 Aug 1994 22:25:29 -0400 (EDT)
From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@cap.gwu.edu>
Subject: Re: Problems in Commish land...

Wes,

Regarding Bawdy Bill the Carousing Commissioner:

"Extremely Friendly" could mean a lot of different things to different folks. While I think I'm getting the drift, it might be helpful for our trusted friends to be a little more specific as to what "Extremely Friendly" connotes. Has Bawdy Bill been caught "flagrantee delicto" (In modern parlance - in the very act of . . .)?

Before rushing in to condemn the fellow, I would like to know just a bit more about what Bill is supposed to have done that constituted this "Extremely Friendly" behavior. It may well be that he has enthusiastically supported several of these leaders and that some of the old hands have misunderstood his enthusiasm. Bill may need an bit of friendly advice in such a situation on avoiding giving the appearance of impropriety in his relationships that would be damaging to the programs of the Boy Scouts of America.

On the other hand, if Bawdy Bill is an apt monaker, then you have quite a different set of considerations.

As a commissioned leader he is expected to be of good moral character. I think that almost any set of ethical considerations would find that taking advantage of a position for self-gain (in this case presumably sexual) to be improper.

Article IX, Section 2 of the BSA's Rules and Regulations sets a policy against any person acting on behalf of the BSA when that person has a conflicting interest. As a commissioned scouter, he is representing the BSA in giving units advice. If he has established personal intimate relations with one or more of the leaders, he now has a personal interest apart and very different than the BSA. In continuing to give advice to the unit he would have a prohibited conflict of interest that in my opinion would be sufficient to decommission him and remove him from any

position of trust. If he is using his position for his own purposes; e.g. sexual liaisons, then he is no longer advancing the purposes of Scouting.

That's a big "if" of course. We can't afford to have folks out there using their positions for personal agendas, especially when the results can be devastating. What is going to happen a bit farther down the road, when he is sued in public over paternity by a disappointed concubine? What kind of press do you think will happen when a quick-witted reporter finds that Bawdy Bill has been doing this all over the place?

**Yours in Scouting, Michael F. Bowman, a/k/a Professor Beaver
Deputy District Commissioner Exploring, GW Dist., NCAC, BSA
Speaking only for myself, but with Scouting Spirit . . .**

_____ mfbowman@CAP.GWU.EDU _____

From mfbowman Fri Aug 12 23:15:26 1994
Date: Fri, 12 Aug 1994 23:01:04 -0400 (EDT)
From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@cap.gwu.edu>
Subject: Re: Problems in Commish land...A Few More Thoughts

Aside from the bad press and loss of public confidence in the quality of BSA leadership that could result from this individual's selfish acts of irresponsibility, the individual leaders may well later decide that his "servicing" procedures warrant legal action. Depending upon the jurisdiction the acts may present a variety of opportunities to initiate private lawsuits for damages.

What the hypothetical situation suggests to me is that we need to adopt a position similar to many professional organizations on this issue. I think we're all aware that it is considered unethical for a doctor, counselor, etc. to have sexual liaisons with a client. Similarly, we might be well advised to follow the example and make it clear that our commissioned leadership is required to exhibit ethical conduct and that sexual liaisons with served scouters is by definition unethical and grounds for dismissal.

We are here for the purpose of serving the Scouts in our units and providing them opportunities to grow in positive ways as evinced by the purposes of Scouting and the various Scout promises, oaths, and laws. It is important, as a result, that we set the best example possible. Taking advantage of other people whether financially, sexually, or otherwise is clearly the wrong example.

Now that Bawdy Bill the Carousing Commissioner has been found guilty of crimes of moral turpitude by virtue of inuendo . . . We at the same time must be careful not to jump the gun, because charges of this nature will absolutely adversely alter Bill's life, perhaps his career and most probably his family life. Before acting, I think we had better get the facts straight. And as they say, "let the chips fall where they may."

Yours in Scouting, Michael F. Bowman, a/k/a Professor Beaver
Deputy District Commissioner Exploring, GW Dist., NCAC, BSA
Speaking only for myself, but with Scouting Spirit . . .

_____ mfbowman@CAP.GWU.EDU _____

Date: Sat, 13 Aug 1994 05:56:54 -0400 (EDT)
From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@cap.gwu.edu>
Subject: Distinguished Commissioner Series - Hypo #2

Several of you asked for more Commissioner hypotheticals for discussion. Here's another for your positive pondering:

You've just received a letter from the Council Scout Executive congratulating you on your selection as the new District Commissioner for the Damocles District. As you open the letter a note in neat hand-written script falls out. Curiosity prevails and you lay the letter aside, scooping up the missive inked out on the Council Commissioner's personal stationary. As you read the note you feel just like you've jumped into a cold mountain stream on a hot day. The note says:

Dear Dan,

As I indicated in Scout Executive's formal letter of congratulations, we were extremely pleased to find your name submitted for the position of District Commissioner. You have established an excellent track record as a dynamic leader who can get results. When you recently received your Wood Badge beads after completing your ticket in seven short months, you again demonstrated that you are the type of Scouter that can turn challenges into successes. And after reviewing your District's record, its clear to me that we desperately need someone of your calibre to turn things around.

While your successor was a wonderful, warm and conscientious commissioner, his long illness before his death last month prevented him from taking an active leadership role in the District. I know that he was very disappointed that he couldn't do much to help in a very troubling situation.

Just to help you get started with the proper focus, I thought it would be worthwhile to give you a run down on your District's biggest challenges:

- 1. All five of your service areas have at least three or four units with lapsed charters, representing a loss of nearly 550 Scouts out of the 2300 Scouts that were registered the year before.**
- 2. Service area five is in the worst condition. Two Troops and two Packs**

have lapsed charters. The remaining eight units were scheduled to recharter last month, but we haven't heard or seen anything from any of them. I think that you should make it a priority to replace lazy Larry the Assistant District Commissioner. He's asleep on the job. I'm really concerned because the lapsed units in his area all were 50 year veteran units.

3. You know how important it is to get Scouts to go to long-term resident camps to retain their membership. In your District most Scouts come from families that can't afford the fees and we have relied heavily on them earning part of their fee through popcorn sales. This year has been particularly alarming. Popcorn sales have fallen off 50% and we've only got two months left to make up the difference.

4. You probably saw the article in the Tabloid Tantalizer last week about a Troop that lost six Scouts on a hike in the mountains. That was one of your Troops. That article on top of the earlier one about hazing in an older Troop have really hurt our membership efforts. I took the opportunity to review the training records in your District and was surprised to see that the most recent training report is two years old and that it showed less than 35% of your Troops had a Scoutmaster or Assistant who had completed Scoutmaster Fundamentals.

5. I've also seen a number of letters from parents sent to the Scout Executive complaining about the Scoutmaster of Troop 666, Stinky Simons, who has been adding his own advancement requirements to each rank. In Troop 666, our largest Troop, the records indicate that only 35% of the Scouts advance in rank each year. I think you might also want to look into the allegations that the Troop is being used as a para-military training unit complete with camouflage utility trousers, marching drills, and activities like self-defense training. As you know all too well, we are not here to create military units.

I know you'll take on these problems and with your leadership that your District will show marked improvement SOON! Let me know how it is going in about a month.

Okay District Commissioner, its your baby. What are you going to do now?

Yours in Scouting, Michael F. Bowman, a/k/a Professor Beaver

**Deputy District Commissioner Exploring, GW Dist., NCAC, BSA
Speaking only for myself, but with Scouting Spirit . . .**

_____ mfbowman@CAP.GWU.EDU _____

To: mfbowman@CAP.GWU.EDU

Subject: Re: Distinguished Commissioner Series - Hypo #2

Date: Sat, 13 Aug 94 21:10:25 BST

Michael ...

An excellent case study. When I did by (British) Group Scout Leader / Administrator/ Commissioner Wood Badge we had a whole morning of such studies, followed by a management game that lasted six hours !

I am not going to respond to the specifics other than to say that I think that we have an excellent medium of informal training here on the Net. I have dug out some material which I have used on Patrol Leader training courses , and might invite our younger readers to join in as well .

IAN

Date: Sat, 13 Aug 1994 20:02:22 -0400 (EDT)
From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@cap.gwu.edu>
Subject: Re: Distinguished Commissioner Series - Hypo #2
To: Ian Ford <ianford@dircon.co.uk>

Ian,

Thanks, I appreciate the encouragement.

Yours in Scouting, Michael F. Bowman, a/k/a Professor Beaver
Deputy District Commissioner Exploring, GW Dist., NCAC, BSA
Speaking only for myself, but with Scouting Spirit . . .
_____ mfbowman@CAP.GWU.EDU _____

Date: Sat, 13 Aug 1994 09:43:59 EDT
From: Cly Bascone <SEQ184@AOL.COM>
Subject: Re: Distinguished Commis...

That one is easy for me I'm going to correct the problems notes like that are sometimes used to motivate we do it a lot you make the problem sound worse even than it is and if you put a fire under the person you have your good com. back that you had before. Some times we do not look ayt things in scouting as what can I do to correct the situation we just get mad and quit. I do not get mad I get it right. I have one of the worse districts in our council it is poor the coal mines have all shut down the old council we where in was over 450,000\$ in debt when they closed it not we are the evil stepchild Sequoyah council had to take in. It makes for a mess but you have to work on it instead of quitting. I drive a hour to work everyday up here 1 way because we have no jobs but in the tri cities or Knoxville they have plenty I try to remeber this when I work with scout leaders in the district and even though I am the councils international com now I was the district com for Tomahaken district and still give my time as a unti com and run this chapter of the o.a. for them. your post reads like one of our old ones would have read after the two largest coal mines shut down after the strike the lapsed troops wasn't because of the district com. it was because a lot of them could not afford to be in scouts again. we corrected this by going out and finding money for dues for the kids Tennessee eastman which is the next county down in Tennessee bailed us out and paid the way of 675 scoutrs whose families got hurt in the coal mine closings there is always away bye cly

Date: Sat, 13 Aug 1994 20:08:48 -0400 (EDT)
From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@cap.gwu.edu>
Subject: Re: Distinguished Commis...

Cly,

Appreciate your response. Too often we look at things from only a single perspective and fail to realize that there may be other factors like jobs and money problems that can have a dramatic effect on a unit. Thanks for the perspective.

Yours in Scouting, Michael F. Bowman, a/k/a Professor Beaver
Deputy District Commissioner Exploring, GW Dist., NCAC, BSA
Speaking only for myself, but with Scouting Spirit . . .
_____ mfbowman@CAP.GWU.EDU _____

Date: Sat, 13 Aug 1994 11:59:07 EDT
From: Freemason@AOL.COM
Subject: Re: Problems in Commish Land...

First, has the friendship continued over the last 20 years as well, or has there been a separation for several years. I ask this because something may have happened to change Bill's personality: was he always a skirt-chaser in his younger days, and does he now find married life too confining? Or maybe his wife doesn't look so hot after having a kid (don't mean to offend, but sometime it takes years to get one's body back after having babies), and the single parents are looking just a little bit better than who he has at home with the kid. Ask him how things are at home - he may say something that will show his train of thought on this matter. After all, you two have been friends for years.

What is "extremely friendly"? Was it flirtation? Did he get caught with his pants down? Did he know these Cub Scouters from younger days and is only having friendly banter? Is he playing favorites with them? As an ADC you would have unit rosters - check to see if the single mothers are mutual acquaintances, and he is unconsciously playing favorites. A little background info goes a long way.

This scenario kinda reminds me of that earlier posting about keeping one's hormones in check while on the weekender.

I do not think that he needs to be removed from the position at this time - I think that the ADC, along with the District Commissioner, may need to reassign him to another group of units, and see if the behavior pattern continues. I would not place him with any more Cub Scout packs; rather would place him with a couple or three Boy Scout troops, and I would pick units where female leaders are not in the forefront. That way, he will be plenty busy to keep from having accusations of fraternizing levelled against him. While I was at it, I would rotate several staff members, just to keep all from falling into complacency with their charges.

Since you and Bill are friends for several years, you should be able to talk straight to the point without straining your friendship over the long haul. Tell him that he needs to refrain from showing favoritism to any leader while he is in his role a commissioner (and remind him that when he attends any scout function, he is in his role as commissioner). This may not have to come as a direct confrontation - since every commissioner staff meeting is supposed to have some training, then a generalized cautionary review of fraternization and favoritism should be addressed to the staff at large - just do it when he is there. He may not be the only one about to fall into that trap.

This was a pretty good one - thanks, I will incorporate it into my own training materials.

YIS, WWW,
Randy Spradling
Assistant District Commissioner

Date: Sat, 13 Aug 1994 10:30:00 MST
From: "Chris Haggerty, Sierra Vista, Arizona"
<CHAGGERTY%ARIZBPA.BITNET@pucc.Princeton.EDU>
Subject: Re: Problems in Commish land...

I have know Bill for 25 years and got my Eagle with him. This is easy. I can be blunt with anyone who has put up with my friendship for 25 years, especially one of my Eagle Scout Buddies from my younger days.

I would get Bill alone and say, it is none of my business what you do in your private life, so I do not want any elaboration about whether the rumors I am hearing about you are true or not. However, for your own protection, I want to be sure you understand BSA policy and what can happen

if you violate or in some cases only appear to violate BSA policy.

Remember

there are a lot of people out there who just go into a freenzy over this stuff, just look at the OJ case as an example. Besides the press just loves to feed on the BSA.

I would then discuss the rumors and implications with him (note word discuss - he may feel the need to express surprise that people see this going on, or he may give an excuss, or just say nothing).

I will offer him some ways out such as moving him to different units to work with or letting him go into the ASM position and leave the Unit Commissioner job.

I will also let Bill know that I have seen the Rumor spreaders force people out of scouting based primarily upon rumors they created without any basis

and I would hate to see that happen to him. I would be sure I let him know

that the reasons people do this vary, they are jealous about his popularity, firendships, feel threaten by his success, or they just do not like him.

End of approach:

This Male-Female relations area is a pet peeve of mine (for the reason stated above). Here in the U.S. we seem to have a lot of trouble with Male /Female friendships without some sexual involvement. When they happen, we

always assume Sex is involved. We need to get off our own insecurities and realize that the sexes can be friends without sex. With Single parents we immediately assume, she/he is after my spouse because they are talking and laughing at the meeting. Think about this one for a minute. Spouses are supposed to be best friends, single parents no longer have that relationship, their need for friendship and social contact now has to be completely filled from the outside. From what I have seen in my short 38 years on this world, our social needs are a LOT stronger than our sexual needs. That is one of the reasons they put some criminals in solitary confinement!

As a country, it seems we still need to grow up in this area.

(Off soapbox)

**Chris Haggerty, District Advancement Chairman,
Cochise District, Catalina Council, Sierra Vista, Arizona**

Date: Sat, 13 Aug 1994 11:59:58 PDT
From: jacobi.PARC@XEROX.COM
Subject: Re: Problems in Commish land...

Here is what I think I would do, at least theoretically:

Figure out whether your old friend Bill does his job as unit commissioner right. Meet the cubmaster and find out whether they like their unit commissioner Bill and whether he gives the right kind of help.

If they like him, ignore the allegations. It doesn't matter. Even if it were true, it is none of your business as long as "extreme friendship" happens in private and is hidden from the cubs. If you happen to find out the allegations were true, tell your old friend Bill to hide it better and that it is his responsibility to make sure that the cubs won't find out and no rumors are started.

If they do not like him, find a new unit commissioner. The private life doesn't matter because you don't want him to be their commissioners anyway.

Give your old friend Bill a second chance with another unit (and watch from the background). If guilty, he might have learned the lesson and won't repeat it.

If not guilty, he really deserved that second chance.

Now about what you hear from other Scouters whom you know and trust is another story. If you hear allegations you have to pin the accuser down. The accuser should really make very clear whether this is a joke, an accusation, or, just a rumor. This is very different from youth protection cases; in this case there are no children involved, there is no danger, and no injustice (except maybe towards Bill and his wife).

Christian

Date: Sat, 13 Aug 1994 17:30:48 -0500
From: lollman karen j <lolma@ACC.WUACC.EDU>
Subject: Re: Problems in Commish land...

On Sat, 13 Aug 1994, Chris Haggerty, Sierra Vista, Arizona wrote:

> completely filled from the outside. From what I have seen in my short
38
> years on this world, our social needs are a LOT stronger than our sexual
> needs. That is one of the reasons they put some criminals in solitary
> confinement!

>
> (Off soapbox)

>
I guess my 39 years on this world gives me a slightly different
perspective <g>. Why do you suppose they put men and women prisoners
in
different buildings?

I think that anytime we put on our uniforms, we **must** accept our role as
representatives of the ideals of Scouting. Any relationships we form
through scouting must be governed by those same ideals. It's a tough
call when the "buddy" relationship exists for over 25 years, but if it
began in scouting, scouting ideals should take precedence. Any female
scouter who is looking to establish a relationship with a married scouter
is no better example than the married scouter...all parties involved need
to be included in any discussions, and if discipline is appropriate for
one, it should also be appropriate for the other.

I'm currently working on a committee with a couple of people rumored to
be involved. It makes me uncomfortable, because although they have
given

me no reason to be suspicious, I see the female acting much differently
when he is around. Is it because he has **authority** or because she
knows him so well? I have also done committee work with his wife and
find her to be a very attractive, likeable, hard-working Scouter. I
don't care who is to blame, or where or when it might have started. It
seems to me that there are a lot of people who are effective scouters, and
have never had these rumors circulated about them. Maybe it has to do
with the way they conduct themselves.

Just my .02.

lollma@acc.wuacc.edu

Date: Sun, 14 Aug 1994 02:47:23 BST
From: Ian Ford <ianford@DIRCON.CO.UK>
Subject: Calling Patrol Leaders - It's your turn

Hi Guys !

You've seen the questions which Professor Beaver has been posting for the Scouters. Here's your very own situation to discuss. As before, I'll post what <actually> happened in a week or so . Adults are welcome to respond , but let's hear the <Scouts> on this one ...

----- T H E S C E N A R I O -----

The original events took place in a British troop, but I have tried to rewrite it so that American Scouts can take part in the discussion.

Troop 57 was returning from Summer Camp by train. Steve was 14 and had been a pain all through the week. There had been rows over camp chores and a lot of other minor aggravations. The SM was in one compartment with the PLC debriefing on the camp. One of the Scouts interrupted to say that they had been to the buffet car and on the way back they had seen Steve in the First Class car throwing light bulbs out of the window.

Background : Steve had come up from the Cub Scouts three years ago. His attendance was sporadic and his training almost non-existent. He has three merit (proficiency) badges. You've heard that he is always getting into some sort of trouble or other at school. At troop meetings Steve sometimes joins in well with games and activities he likes , but on other occasions he is very disruptive.

Action Required : The PLC will need to recommend to the Scout Master what action to take about Steve.

Ian Ford

From: ianford@dircon.co.uk (Ian Ford)
To: mfbowman@CAP.GWU.EDU
Subject: Internet Based Training
Date: Sun, 14 Aug 94 22:32:54 BST

Michael -

I was sitting reading my email with one ear on the radio , which was a programme about the Open University (our national distance learning university.) The thought struck me ...

Why not organise a computer-based training package using the " case studies " approach we have tried on the 'Net ?

Would it be possible to get accreditation of some sort as supplemental leader training ?

I'm wondering if Gilwell would bite ? I might float it with the Director of Leader Training and the Headquarters Technology Adviser at the Gilwell Reunion ...

What do you think ?

IAN

From mfbowman Sun Aug 14 22:46:43 1994
Date: Sun, 14 Aug 1994 22:38:45 -0400 (EDT)
From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@cap.gwu.edu>
Subject: Re: Internet Based Training
To: Ian Ford <ianford@dircon.co.uk>

Ian,

Your idea strikes me as very interesting and worthwhile. As we move into a new era of communications at the fingertips, why not?

Our National Office, unfortunately has already performed its version of the Pope condemning Galileo. They are paranoid that volunteers will be out of control and that they are losing their ability to control information (translation power) due to Internet on-line services. Instead of embracing the opportunity, they have been meeting to decide how to handle the "problem". Characterization of the technology as a problem vice an opportunity tells one a bit about their mindset. Consequently, I wouldn't be too hopeful about BSA until they warm up to it, although it never hurts to ask.

I think your idea of asking about it at Gilwell is the better approach. If adopted at an international level or at least encouraged, it will be much easier to sell here.

It could easily be a part of BSA's University of Scouting and offered as an alternative course, once BSA sees the positive attributes and understands them.

**Yours in Scouting, Michael F. Bowman, a/k/a Professor Beaver
Deputy District Commissioner Exploring, GW Dist., NCAC, BSA
Speaking only for myself, but with Scouting Spirit . . .**

_____ mfbowman@CAP.GWU.EDU _____

Date: Mon, 15 Aug 1994 11:58:11 MDT
From: Michael Kalnay <kalnay@GOV.NT.CA>
Subject: Re: Problems in Commish land...

Michael Bowman said:

- >
- > **If he has established personal intimate**
- > **relations with one or more of the leaders, he now has a personal interest**
- > **apart and very different than the BSA. In continuing to give advice to**
- > **the unit he would have a prohibited conflict of interest that in my**
- > **opinion would be sufficient to decommission him and remove him from**
- > **any**
- > **position of trust.**
- >

One presumes, then, that married persons could not be involved in any BSA activities where one might be in a position of authority or of responsibility over or for the other???? Or, that single people involved in Scouting should not develop any personal intimate relationships (including perhaps planning to marry) except with persons outside of Scouting or, if within Scouting, in positions where neither one would be likely to find themself in a position of trust or authority vis a vis the other????

Surely this can not be so???

**Michael Kalnay @inukshuk.gov.nt.ca
from Canada's not so chilly North (8C today)**

Date: Tue, 16 Aug 1994 00:26:36 -0400 (EDT)
From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@cap.gwu.edu>
Subject: Re: Problems in Commish land...

Michael,

Whoa! Please take the comment in its intended context, which was the situation of a commissioner advising a unit leader. My discussion was limited to "commissioned scouters" covered by the conflict of interest rule. Similarly, I'm not sure it would be a good idea for one spouse to act as commissioner to the unit where his/her spouse was unit leader - kinda hard to evaluate unit health impartially.

Intimacies between unit leaders is another question and one that I don't think is covered by the same rule. There it would seem common sense that spouses could certainly work together in a unit - we do promote the family after all. As to intimacies between unrelated/unmarried unit leaders, that would create an issue of whether they still exhibited the moral character necessary for leadership for me. The key word is "exhibited". I don't suppose many would fault two leaders a court'in, provided it didn't interfere and that private matters stayed private. The real issue is whether their behavior would adversely affect the Scouts.

Sorry for the ambiguity.

Yours in Scouting, Michael F. Bowman, a/k/a Professor Beaver
Deputy District Commissioner Exploring, GW Dist., NCAC, BSA
Speaking only for myself, but with Scouting Spirit . . .
_____ mfbowman@CAP.GWU.EDU _____

Date: Tue, 16 Aug 1994 09:20:35 MDT
From: Michael Kalnay <kalnay@GOV.NT.CA>
Subject: Re: Problems in Commish land...
In-Reply-To: from "Michael F. Bowman" at Aug 16, 94 12:26 (midnight)

Thanx for the additional info ... it cleared up the ambiguities and, given the limitations you have noted, I'll buy your argument as far as not wanting this Commissioner to be responsible for that unit leader

Michael Kalnay @inukshuk.gov.nt.ca.

Date: Tue, 16 Aug 1994 08:40:59 -0600
From: John Oakes <joakes@CARINA.UNM.EDU>
Subject: Politics

Here is the senario... Bill has been assigned as an Assistant District Commissioner. However, He has no experience in the ranks so to speak, no unit experience in Cubbies, Scouts, Explorers, etc. Bill is also not trained in Commissioner Basic... At least not to my Knowledge. But, wears an ADC rank patch. How would you other scouters deal with this apparent politics?

Date: Wed, 17 Aug 1994 12:13:17 -0500
From: Mary Lee Foley <MFOLEY@UTNET.UTOLEDO.EDU>
Subject: Extremely friendly :-)

The recent exchange about Bawdy Bill reminded me of a few minutes at summer camp. I had just left the evening leaders' meeting with our Scoutmaster. We were walking along a dark path with no flashlight when we heard someone behind us comment to his buddy just loud enough for us to hear him, 'I sure hope those two up ahead are engaged, since they're holding hands and walking so close together.' At that point, we chuckled, the SM pulled me closer for a kiss and only after that did he announce to them that we were beyond engaged, having been married for 23 years. We submitted to good-natured teasing the rest of the week whenever they spotted us.

Mary Lee Foley
Software Specialist
University of Toledo
mfoley@utnet.utoledo.edu

Den Leader Coach
Troop Committee
District Membership Chairman
(and wife of Scoutmaster Ray!)

Date: Sun, 21 Aug 1994 11:03:18 EDT
From: Freemason@AOL.COM
Subject: The District from Hell long post

Michael Bowman posted this challenge a couple of weeks ago, and it took me this long to formulate my response - it was a pretty overwhelming challenge.

Considering I saw no other responses, maybe it's taking everyone else this long to think it through. I'll admit my response is in no way all-encompassing, and I know that I have left out several fine points.

<Introductory paragraphs deleted>

>Just to help you get started with the proper focus, I thought it would be >worthwhile to give you a run down on your District's biggest challenges:

These challenges are gross understatements! Seems this is the scenario from one of those '50s sci-fi movies! You know, the ones with the poster that always shows the lead actress with a horrified look on her face...Visualize this: let's see - Scouter with a look of horror... "He thought his job would be easy -""But what he didn't know was, that he had been assigned to..." "The District from Hell!!!" "Experience the Horrors!" "See the Dilemma!" "Is there no end to it?" I think you get the picture <G>

I see two items that the District Commissioner has to clear up right away: items 2 (lazy Larry) and 5 (Troop 666), as well as certain elements of Item 4 (Tabloid Tantalizer). These three items in themselves are going to be a handful and will probably take up most of the new DC's time, but since two of them contain deviations, they need to be addressed quickly. I will shift the orders of priority and address how I think they should be handled.

I echoed the problems for those who forgot the hurdles.

>2. Service area five is in the worst condition. Two Troops and two Packs >have lapsed charters. The remaining eight units were scheduled to >recharter last month, but we haven't heard or seen anything from any of >them. I think that you should make it a priority to replace lazy Larry >the Assistant District Commissioner. He's asleep on the job. I'm really >concerned because the lapsed units in his area all were 50 year veteran >units.

It's time for a powwow with Larry. Find out what is on his mind and why the units lapsed. Maybe in his case the Peter Principle has come through. Maybe he was assigned this job and he found he isn't happy with it, and doesn't know how to say so; give him the chance to now that you're in charge.

If this is not the case, then ask him if he is in touch with his unit commissioners (UC), if there are any. This may be a crucial part of the problem - no staff. If none are there, a comprehensive UC recruiting effort needs to be undertaken. If he has a staff, then you both need to evaluate the performance of each member. If they are in office just for the glory, then give them some real dog-body tasks to do - they will either produce or they will get off the pot.

Larry may not need firing, but he may need some hand-holding (read goading) to get his scouting job done. Maybe he is wearing more than one hat - encourage him to relinquish some of his other jobs, because he needs to focus on his ADC job. Put him on probation - if things don't start to shape up in three or four months, then re-assign him to something he can handle (unless he is totally incompetent, a more effective assignment should be available).

Once this is done, it will be time to go to each lapsed unit, with Larry and the UC (current or new, it doesn't matter at this stage) for each unit, and find out what happened to the lapsed units. Encourage the leaders to revive the units; if they don't want to, go to the chartered organizations and discuss this. They may have to provide or recruit fresh leadership. If they are not interested, get with the District Exec and see if he has any prospects for changing chartered partners. It may be possible to revive the units if less than a year has elapsed since their demise.

I would evaluate all my resources (experienced commissioner staff) and see who would be good on a special care team. I would get them in gear on these veteran units to try to revive them.

Meantime, I would want to know where the District Executive has been occupying his time because he sure wasn't keeping the district volunteers aware of things, either. Maybe I've been spoiled, but whenever a unit is in trouble in my district, my DE has always been there. Seems in this case, he either had his head up an anatomically impossible location or else he was not focusing on the job at hand.

>5. I've also seen a number of letters from parents sent to the Scout
>Executive complaining about the Scoutmaster of Troop 666, Stinky Simons,
>who has been adding his own advancement requirements to each rank.
In
>Troop 666, our largest Troop, the records indicate that only 35% of the
>Scouts advance in rank each year. I think you might also want to look
>into the allegations that the Troop is being used as a para-military
>training unit complete with camouflage utility trousers, marching drills,
>and activities like self-defense training. As you know all too well, we
>are not here to create military units.

I think it's time for the DC and the District Exec to have a friendly chat with Stinky. Try to get him to meet with you at a neutral location, not on a meeting night. He needs to be reminded, point blank, that there are certain policies that need to be adhered to, and that several complaints from parents have shown that he might be deviating from those policies. It may be that the boys wanted to do the paramilitary stuff - if that is the case, then he needs to improve his directed guidance and tell them to start a JROTC corps at their local high school. If he is the culprit, then he needs to stop it - NOW.

As far as the advancement additions, then he needs to stop that now.
Remind him that as Scoutmaster, he is obligated to stick with the rules of the program. He should understand that those rules do not include additional requirements - no more, no less.

If he tells you to take a flying leap, it's time to meet with the Committee

Chairman and the Chartered Rep. They may have turned a blind eye, or they really don't understand the rules. Remind them that a serious problem exists, and that you are there to help them solve it. They must solve it themselves, or else BSA may pull the charter.

The Scout Executive is probably investigating the hazing complaints, and you should probably stay out of his way on this matter - only answer, truthfully, if asked, and only what you know for sure yourself.

>4. You probably saw the article in the Tabloid Tantalizer last week about >a Troop that lost six Scouts on a hike in the mountains. That was one of >your Troops. That article on top of the earlier one about hazing in an >older Troop have really hurt our membership efforts. I took the >opportunity to review the training records in your District and was >surprised to see that the most recent training report is two years old and >that it showed less than 35% of your Troops had a Scoutmaster or Assistant >who had completed Scoutmaster Fundamentals.

This is a job for the UCs to get in gear and do whatever it takes to get those leaders trained by encouraging them to get to the next Scout Leader Training course. They may be green, or ignorant of the policies; either way, they need to be taught that the course of action is deviating from policy. Now, the hazing issue would need to be handled like the jumpin' Jim issue in the earlier posts - just use the methods that we came up with earlier, tailored to suit the unit leaders.

I would also be asking my District Training Chairman for an update of training status. Was there a transition of training chairs? If so, then this may be the impetus needed to get them in gear; if not, then maybe the training chair needs to be encouraged to do his/her job. I would also review those roster updates the DE was supposed to get me to check on training status. However, organizing the training schedule is that person's responsibility, not mine. If they are shirking,

then the District Committee needs to know; if the committee is made up of good ole boys (and girls), and they don't care, maybe it's time for the Council President and Scout

Executive to step in and clean house (they can do that if need be).

>1. All five of your service areas have at least three or four units with
>lapsed charters, representing a loss of nearly 550 Scouts out of the 2300
>Scouts that were registered the year before.

Time for a Commissioner Staff Meeting and find out the status of each unit, and what the needs are. The first priority here is to try to keep the currently active units viable. Then, try to reorganize the lapsed units (but first find out why the units lapsed).

Get the DE and the UCs to contact the Chartered organizations and find out from their perspective why the units lapsed. Point them in the right direction for getting the ball rolling again.

>3. You know how important it is to get Scouts to go to long-term resident
>camps to retain their membership. In your District most Scouts come from
>families that can't afford the fees and we have relied heavily on them
>earning part of their fee through popcorn sales. This year has been
>particularly alarming. Popcorn sales have fallen off 50% and we've only
>got two months left to make up the difference.

Time to look at the economics of the district and find out what happened - maybe the main industry in the district dried up and no one has money to spare to buy popcorn (or cookies for the Girl Scouts). If that is the case, then maybe other funding methods need to be evaluated.

It may be a matter of the boys not hustling. Get the UCs to find out if this is the case, by having them discuss the problems with their unit leaders. You have about a month to tackle this one, and the other items are more critical to the overall program.

>I know you'll take on these problems and with your leadership that your

>District will show marked improvement SOON! Let me know how it is going
>in about a month.

These are not overnight solutions to problems which have not occurred overnight. The best the Council Commissioner is going to get is a progress report. Maybe a couple of items can be solved in a month - I see a minimum six months on several of these. Other problems, such as hazing, are out of the DC's hands - the Council Commissioner knows this - but most of these opportunities for excellence are within the grasp of most tenacious persons.

Unfortunately, there will be a lot of ruffled feathers before this list is done, and the new DC had better make sure he will have the backing from Council that will be needed to carry it out.

YiS, WWW,

Randy Spradling

Assistant District Commissioner

Date: Sat, 20 Aug 1994 00:44:30 -0400 (EDT)

From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@cap.gwu.edu>

Subject: Re: District Commissioners

Alan,

On rebuilding a District Commissioners Staff - consider recruiting from the ranks of retired Cubmasters, Scoutmasters and Advisors. Many of these folks who no longer have the time to run a unit day-in-day out for the many hours Mike Walton has detailed in past postings, can still manage to help a few hours here and there and certainly have a feel for the problems of approaching a unit leader. In another Council, we used to tap the senior camp staff for Unit Commissioners. We almost always had a few with National Camp School Training as camp commissioners graduating from college, who were assets. Later many of them became unit leaders. In a time of shortage their energy made up for a lack of aged wisdom.

Yours in Scouting, Michael F. Bowman, a/k/a Professor Beaver
Deputy District Commissioner Exploring, GW Dist., NCAC, BSA
Speaking only for myself, but with Scouting Spirit . . .

_____ mfbowman@CAP.GWU.EDU _____

Date: Sun, 21 Aug 1994 02:14:52 -0400 (EDT)
From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@cap.gwu.edu>
Subject: Re: Are we about to make TRAINED meaningless?
To: "Garbutt, Keith" <GARBUTT%WVNVM.BITNET@pucc.Princeton.EDU>

Keith,

I heartily agree. We'll be moving a bit slower, but we've already got the gang challenged to do it well in spite of earlier misgivings. Look forward to hearing of your experiences.

Yours in Scouting, Michael F. Bowman, a/k/a Professor Beaver
Deputy District Commissioner Exploring, GW Dist., NCAC, BSA
Speaking only for myself, but with Scouting Spirit . . .
_____ mfbowman@CAP.GWU.EDU _____

Date: Sun, 21 Aug 1994 22:34:36 -0400 (EDT)
From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@cap.gwu.edu>
Subject: Re: Yes, we ARE about to make TRAINED meaningless
To: Ian Ford <ianford@dircon.co.uk>

Ian,

Retention is not very good on this side of the pond. About 70% make it through all four years of Cubs and about 80% of them join a Troop. Then the problems start - the average tenure for a boy is about 14 months in a Troop. I'm afraid that's why there are only about 800,000 Boy Scouts and some 2.7 million Cubs in the U.S. with a few more in Tigers and Exploring to bring the total to just over 4.1 million.

The size of this organization has changed its method of operations over the year to more closely resemble a multi-national corporation with direction coming from the top. Many, many moons ago there was consultation and consideration of front line opinion. This last change hit us cold and with all the force of a roller-coaster just tipping over an unexpected precipice.

This failure to anticipate front-line reaction is not a good sign, any more than when the French relied on "elan" to beat machine guns in the First World War. And in a society so well populated with lawyers and people willing to use them, it seems a bit dangerous to cut back on training, especially in areas where safety is an issue. Of the four hours, some 40 minutes will be on Youth Protection. These folks will be asked to sign on for additional Youth Protection training as a condition of getting an awards or recognitions in the future. That may address one area, but leaves a lot of room for trouble with knives, stoves, etc. And while our Cub program limits camping to the older ranks, there's plenty of room for problems.

As a former trial attorney/barrister (soon to be again), I can well imagine a Cub leader on the witness stand faced by a dour attorney. "Now let me see, according to your statement to the police, you are a trained Scout leader. And just how much training have you had?"

"Four hours!"

"FOUR HOURS! Did I hear you correctly? Would you repeat your answer for

the benefit of the jury?"

"Gulp, ffffffffour hours."

"And in this exceedingly lengthy training period, just what did you learn?"

"Well most of it was on protecting kids from child molesters and an overview of the Scout organization, you know - uniforms, meetings, dues and the like."

"In your training, did you receive instruction on how to conduct a safe field trip, I mean rules for safety walking along the road, preventing lost children, what to do when separated?"

"Well not exactly."

"Well that's my point exactly, your Scouts didn't have any idea how to act on a field trip and it's not a real surprise that one of them got separated and in panic ran across six lanes of traffic only to become a hood ornament trying to find you, is it?"

"Objection."

"Sustained. The jury will disregard the last remark. Counselor please rephrase your question."

...

And so it would go.

Now, if learned counsel for the defense had his wit about him he might rehabilitate the witness by going into the ongoing training at Roundtables and pull it off.

Our District has about 6000 Scouts and holds six Roundtables a month (Two for Cubs, Two for Boy Scouts, One for Venture, One for Exploring). We reach about 300-350 leaders a month, which is good considering we have about 95 Packs, 85 Troops and Six Posts.

At the Cub and Boy Scout level the Roundtables are structured to last about an hour and half (usually two hours).

- * Pre-meeting displays, handouts, coffee, etc.
- * 15 minutes of administrative announcements
- * Program ideas for the month ahead (ideas for October in September)
- * Sample Ceremonies
- * Training exercises - how-to's
- * Sometimes a talk on a Scout topic - mountain hiking - planning, precautions, preparations
- * Training on Scout Skills; e.g. training leaders how to teach safety to Cubs as they begin to carve pinewood derby cars.
- * Discussions
- * Awards and recognitions for leaders
- * Songs, stunts, skits, etc. (Cub RT only)
- * Commissioner's comments
- * Dist. Exec. comments
- * More one-on-one as people pack up and leave

In addition the Roundtable Staffs usually present a separate course at least once a year on Firemanship (stoves, fuels, lanterns, etc.).

Our PowWow is a Council event that draws about 1500 Cub Scout Leaders. It

is almost always a major project to find a site large enough with the right facilities. About 60 courses are offered ranging from the traditional crafts (not well populated) to motivation, to leadership, to management, to religious awards, to hiking trails, to camping and much more. At the same time a Den Chief training school is held at the same site. Districts usually have a second Den Chief training school as well.

PowWow attendees can pick up to six courses of one hour each, less if a longer course like Den Leader Coach. Takes a computer to organize this miniture university effort. Anyway a leader might typically spend time on how to run a successful program, learn some skills, try role-playing on problem solving, learn how to use a den chief, figure out a budget for a Pack, learn about program opportunities like hiking trails, or a similar mix.

Teaching is two to four deep in each course to assure that opinion and personality are not major factors. Instructors are carefully screened and evaluated. Almost all are either Wood Badge or very experienced with successful unit programs with training at Philmont or other sites.

Its a trainer's heaven.

Yours in Scouting, Michael F. Bowman, a/k/a Professor Beaver

**Deputy District Commissioner Exploring, GW Dist., NCAC, BSA
Speaking only for myself, but with Scouting Spirit . . .**

_____ mfbowman@CAP.GWU.EDU _____

Date: Sun, 21 Aug 1994 23:26:34 -0400 (EDT)
From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@cap.gwu.edu>
Subject: Re: The District from Hell long post
To: Freemason@AOL.COM

Randy,

Great answers - enjoyed the posting - you picked up on some things that I hadn't even thought about. Hope others pick up on the thread. I know that Crossroads of America Council has an annual course on reviving lapsed units, maybe we'll hear some scoop from that direction.

I think I'd also suggest that the DC make an appointment with his health care professionals for an evaluation before the stress hits - grin.

**Yours in Scouting, Michael F. Bowman, a/k/a Professor Beaver
Deputy District Commissioner Exploring, GW Dist., NCAC, BSA
Speaking only for myself, but with Scouting Spirit . . .**

_____ mfbowman@CAP.GWU.EDU _____

Date: Mon, 22 Aug 1994 23:35:58 -0400 (EDT)
From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@cap.gwu.edu>
Subject: Re: The District from Hell
To: Freemason@aol.com

Randy,

What you saw that I had not contemplated were:

- 1. The D.E. may not have been doing his job on watching the units (here its totally a commissioner function and we watch like hawks).**
- 2. Training leader/team changes/transitions - too obvious to hit me in the face, but a real possibility.**
- 3. Larry may be struggling with poor UC's.**

I grew up with a father very active as an Institutional Rep. and later on District Committee and likewise started reading all his stuff. I still have his patches and some of the old wreathed commissioner patches. The later were presented to me by old time commissioners in successive stints on camp staffs where I learned the art as a young apprentice. Its in the blood.

Confession, I too don't have the temperment to work with boys every week, being a Den Leader was my toughest job. Cubmaster was mostly an adult-to-adult job and O.K. My days as ASM/SM were when I was young and less a grump. Now Commissioning is the right place for me to play in the process.

**Yours in Scouting, Michael F. Bowman, a/k/a Professor Beaver
Deputy District Commissioner Exploring, GW Dist., NCAC, BSA
Speaking only for myself, but with Scouting Spirit . . .**

_____ mfbowman@CAP.GWU.EDU _____

From: Freemason@aol.com
To: mfbowman@cap.gwu.edu
Date: Mon, 22 Aug 94 08:55:17 EDT
Subject: Re: The District from Hell

THX for the compliment - I guess I have been at this "commissioner" business a while (unofficially). See, my father was a Neighborhood Commissioner, Cub Scout Roundtable Staff & Commissioner, and ADC. I would get hold of his books and training handouts & read them when I was a yute. It might have had something to do with wanting to know what those guys wearing wreaths on their badges of office did - I remember seeing my NC once in the first troop I was in, and Dad was our NC in my second troop. The last two troops as a yute never had active commissioners (this was about the time that National was trying to dismantle the program (early-to-mid 70's). I think some of it rubbed off on me after all. I guess that I have been a commissioner for a longer time than what I have been officially.

I guess I like working as a Commissioner because I have found that, although I am a father myself, I don't have a whole lot of patience with kids. I prefer working with adults; always have, probably always will. Wife & I were talking about that about a month ago: my son just turned four, and will be old enough for the program in a few years. We were deliberating how involved I would be in his unit, and she pointed out that I probably should not plan on being an ASM or SM, because I don't have the temperament for it (she's a psych major). Maybe she's right.

I do love Commissioner work, however. It's a more active role than any committee work (except maybe OA Chapter/Lodge Advisor or Training Chairman), and it allows me to see what the units are doing without having to get into the minutiae or worrying about being available for outings, etc.

I was hoping that Kathy Cerveney and a couple other commissioners would pick

up on the thread, but I think your latest was a little overwhelming for most
(hey, it took me about 2 weeks to respond!).

I'm not sure what I picked up on that you didn't - enlighten me. I'm always
curious about how my mind operates, from another's perspective (I know, depraved <G>)

YiS, WWW,
Randy Spradling
Civil Engineer in my spare time
(left-handed people are the only ones in their right minds)

Date: Sat, 10 Sep 1994 02:08:42 CST
From: "Settummanque, the blackeagle" <waltoml@WKUVX1.WKU.EDU>
Subject: Four Pound Binder

I tried and tried to find my copy of the posting that I made back in 1992 about the binder that sits beside me here in the office room of Blackeagle Services. This white four-inch binder weighs in at about 4.5 pounds and is literally the ultimate "Commissioners' Fieldbook".

While I may find through the archives in the coming week the original posting, here's what is PRESENTLY in this binder and why I deem it important.

Those of us from outside the BSA won't find most of this "informative", as it concentrates on basic information that each volunteer Commissioner should carry around with them. Those within the BSA, and especially those serving as Unit Commissioners (that's a commissioner with responsibilities to Cub, Scout, and Exploring units) would find this table of contents somewhat interesting:

The Binder is now divided into 31 sections. There are still eight broad categories:

INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL INFORMATION
CURRENT ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS
CALENDARS
MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION AND PROGRAM SUPPORT
COPIES OF IMPORTANT THINGS DEALING WITH *MY* JOB OR ROLE
REFERENCE ITEMS AND INFO
CONTACTS AND CARDS
BLANK FORMS AND MATERIALS

INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL INFORMATION

- 1: blank pieces of paper for notes
- BSA at a Glance Fact Sheet (BSA #2-501)
- Youth Protection Policies of the BSA Fact Sheet
- SCOUT OATH OR PROMISE sheet (from Cornerstone)
- SCOUT LAW sheet (from Cornerstone)
- OUTDOOR CODE sheet (from Cornerstone)
- MOTTO AND SLOGAN sheet (from Cornerstone)
- "Welcome to the World of Scouting" recruitment sheet
(from the Northwest Suburban Council BSA)

LEVELS OF SCOUTING'S OUTDOOR PROGRAM (from Cornerstone)
ALPHA PHI ALPHA FRATERNITY AND THE BSA (BSA #7-450)
Personal Biography information for speeches and dinners
"Murphy's Laws--and other Truths! (with various font examples)
Personal calendar
BSA "This way" signs (looks like "ONE WAY" roadsigns with a
BSA logo on the corner and the wording "THIS WAY". Comes
in *really handy* when you have to change a meeting
location at the last moment!)

- 2: "How to Form an Explorer Post" Scouts-L posting I wrote in**
November of 1991 (it does a great job outlining the
way to organize a unit, any unit)
Exploring Techniques--Post Organization (BSA #6623)
- 3: Leadership Training: Plans, Procedures, Materials (BSA #4169)**
- 4: Commissioner Basic Training Manual (BSA #3614)**
- 5: Insignia Guide (BSA #3064)**
- 6: Advancement Guidelines: Council and District Functions**
(BSA #33087)
- 7: "General Suggestions for Good Meetings" (from Cornerstone)**
"Why Training" (from the Old Kentucky Home Council)
The BSA's Trainer's Creed (from the backside of some BSA item)
"Council's Training Mission" (from the Old Kentucky Home
Council)
"Exploring Training Mission" (from the Old Kentucky Home
Council)
- ** Application for the Professional Circle (Application for**
the Professional Training Award)
"The Aims of Wood Badge", _Scouting_ article written by Joe
Merton (former director of the Boy Scout Division)
Boy Scout Leader Wood Badge Fact Sheet (BSA #2-539)
"Two Tiny Wooden Beads" (from Wood Badge training materials)
Exploring Leadership Skills (from Exploring Advanced Seminar)
various Wood Badge invite/interest flyers and email postings
"Recommendation to Attend Wood Badge" (from Transatlantic
Council)
Exploring Leadership Institute information

- 8: National map of Regions/Areas/Councils**
Numerical listing of local Councils (1983)(from Field Support Division)
Numerical listing of local Councils (1978) from Field Support Division)
- 9: Paraprofessional Creed (as used in 1976-79)**
Exploring's Key Three at National, Regional and Area levels (1975-80)
BSA Local Council Directory (1986 version)
National map of Regions/Areas/Councils (1986 version)
- 10: Registration and Subscription information (compiled from various sources)**
Jim Moyer (former SE Region Director of Personnel)'s note informing Regional volunteers and professionals to reregister.
General registration information from DuPage Area Council (extracted from a booklet they provide every Scouter)
Policies concerning moneyrasing (from a variety of sources)
Unit Budget Plan (BSA # 28-426)
Unit Money-Earning Application (BSA #4427)
- 11: Charter and Bylaws of the Boy Scouts of America (BSA #4490)**
- 12: Rules and Regulations of the Boy Scouts of America (BSA 4490A)**
- 13: Foundations for Growth information**
Quality Unit Award -Cub Scout Pack form (BSA #14-220)
Quality Unit Award -Boy Scout Troop form (BSA #14-221)
Quality Unit Award -Explorer Post or Ship form (BSA #14-223)
Ten Tests of Successful Packs (old Honor Unit form (BSA #))
Ten Tests of Successful Troops (old Honor Unit form (BSA #))
Southeast Region Honor Commissioner information
BSA Mission Statement and "SME" information I did for Georgia-Carolina Council
Exploring Per-For-Mance record (obtained at Leaders's Exchange during Philmont Training conference)
Commissioner Staff Roster
"Directions for the Employee Performance Review" (from Eastern Kentucky University's Division of Human Resources)
Employee Performance Review (from Eastern Kentucky University's Division of Human Resources)

- Student Evaluation Form (from Eastern Kentucky University's Division of Student Life)
- 1990 Top Ten Career list (from a minicourse I attended; I used it to plan new Explorer Posts in the community by)
- Funny "Guide to Resident Assistant Performance Appraisal (which I've whited-out the "Resident Assistant" part and substituted "Commissioner Staff")
- Project Learning Tree information
- Walton's "Program Evaluation Questionnaire" poster
- various Exploring, Scouting and Cub Scout clip art (for "emergencies")
- Poster of Scout emblem and space to write information (was the cover of a spring camporee in Germany)
- "The Commissioner's Creed" (from "Howdy Commissioner!", from the Transatlantic Council)
- Spreadsheets from monthly membership/unit/b-l/quality units/top leaders trained from various local Councils
- blank "spreadsheets"
- Open Letter to parents of kids residing in government housing in the Ludwigsburg Military Community (Troop 225)
- Standing Operating Procedures (SOP) (from Kentucky Army National Guard)
- National Eagle Scout Association (NESA) information]
- "Helpful Hints for Units visiting East Berlin" (from "Howdy Commissioner!", from the Transatlantic Council)
- sample military Information Paper
- Annual Scouting Report -Ludwigsburg/Kornwestheim Military Community
- 14: "Your Home, Your Boy and Scouting" (photocopied from the pamphlet and sent to me by Paul Wolf)
- 15: ALL RANKS PERSONNEL #15 (which explains the Army's "permissive temporary duty (Permissive TDY)" policy and program.)
- 16: East Central Region Exploring Recognition Program Council Guidebook (explains the procedure for the Bronze, Gold and Silver Big Horn Awards, the Exploring Leadership Awards and other Exploring recognitions).
- 17: not used
- 18: not used
- 19: not used

- 20: not used**
- 21: not used**
- 22: not used**
- 23: not used**
- 24: Exploring Reference Guide (BSA # 3171A)
Exploring Clipart (with old style "Big E")**
- 25: various activity newsletters, flyers and other program information**
- 26: Bluegrass Scouting Alliance Club information**
- 27: Advancement information**
Troop Operations Plan Fact Sheet (BSA #2-573)
new Tenderfoot, Second and First Class requirements cards
Council Advancement Guidelines from DuPage Area Council
blank Application for Merit Badge sheet
Life to Eagle packet (BSA #18-927)
Eagle Scout Award Application (BSA #58-728)
Eagle Scout Award Application (old version, BSA #30-728)
Letter of Recommendation for Eagle Award (from Transatlantic Council)
Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook (from Transatlantic Council)
Eagle Scout Court of Honor (also found in our archives)
General Guidelines (from National Eagle Scout Association newsletter)
"Making Eagles Fly -- and Keeping Them Flying" (Eagletips version one from Scouts-I)
Distinguished Eagle Scout Fact Sheet (BSA #2-529)
- 28: illustration of 13 "Diamond Jubilee" patches**
Hometown USA Award notice sent to Scout Executives and Regional staffs
Hometown USA Award application
Eastern Kentucky University's Silver Scouter Award information
Explorer Achievement Award information
Quartermaster Award application
Explorer Leadership Award information and application
William H. Spurgeon Award information and nomination form
The Congressional Awards information background
Presidents' Environmental Youth Award (BSA #21-154)
Scoutmaster Award of Merit Application (BSA #58-413)

Staff Application -- 1993 National Scout Jamboree
Staff Application -- 1989 National Scout Jamboree
The Good Shepard Emblem Recommendation form (BSA #77-062)
Fact Sheet: Scouting and Conservation (BSA #2-519)
World Conservation Award application (from Transatlantic Council)
current William T. Hornaday Award application (BSA #21-107A)
old William T. Hornaday Award application (BSA #21-107)
Youth Leadership in America Award information (BSA #27-112)
Youth Leadership in America Award application (award don't exist anymore; BSA #27-113)
Veteran Application (BSA #28-701)
old Application for the National Camping Award (BSA#)
full color copy of Scoutmaster Handbook pages showing square knots
BGSA handout called "The BSA and the Environment" (done for Earth Day festival activities)
President's or Buckskin Nomination form (from Old Kentucky Home Council)
Recommendation for Nomination for the District Award of Merit
Recommendation for Nomination for the Silver Beaver
Philmont Trading Post price list (from 1989)
Individual Scout Record (BSA # 6518)
Baden-Powell Patrol Star Record (BSA #)
Vigil Honor information (from Transatlantic Council)
Vigil Honor Recommendation (from Transatlantic Council)
Activity Segment Program information (from Northwest Suburban Council)

30: Fact sheets from the External Communications Division, BSA

31: Business cards from past Chief Scouts, from National/Regional/Area/Council professionals and volunteers

--

Settummanque, the blackeagle... (MAJ) Mike L. Walton (
co-Owner, Blackeagle Services _____)
(h) 502-782-7992 (f) 502-781-7279 (w) 502-782-7467 |=-=|]
5350 Louisville Road, #52 Bowling Green, KY 42101-7211 -----
Internet: WALTOML@WKUVX1.WKU.EDU/America OnLine:
KYBLKEAGLE@AOL.COM
Blackeagle Services is NOT affiliated with & does not speak for Western

Kentucky University but is the home to Leaders Online! Ask us about it!

Date: Sat, 24 Sep 1994 22:25:36 -0400 (EDT)
From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@cap.gwu.edu>
Subject: Re: Cub Scout roundup nite at school

Nate,

With regard to your enthusiastic D.E. and School rallies, it sounds like the situation is probably a lot more complex than you were able to describe.

Did the Schools let the Scout Executive know how they felt? Have you asked your District Commissioner or District Chairman for help? Does the Scout Executive or the DE's Field Director know about this?

It sounds like there are some communications problems here.

Assuming that the DE is saying a lot of good stuff that gets easily misinterpreted, how about asking the District Commissioner to sit in on a rally. I don't know many District Commissioners that can't get a DE's ear. Maybe having an outsider listen in could give some balance.

If the contents of the DE's messages need to be reworked to avoid misunderstanding, then I suspect that if the District Commissioner can't get his attention, he/she is in a position to raise the issue with DE's superior (Scout Exec. or Field Director). If the DE can't hear them, it won't matter - he'll soon be looking for a new job. I suspect that if reasonable effort fail and the problem remain, the Scout Exec. would be very interested in getting involved. He/she can't afford to lose the goodwill and help of the schools in the area and certainly doesn't want to lose potential members.

Yours in Scouting, Michael F. Bowman, a/k/a Professor Beaver
Deputy District Commissioner Exploring, GW Dist., NCAC, BSA
Speaking only for myself, but with Scouting Spirit . . .

_____ mfbowman@CAP.GWU.EDU _____

Date: Fri, 18 Nov 1994 13:52:05 -0500
From: Todd Tingblad <TINGBLTN@CNSVAX.UWEC.EDU>
Subject: FOUR DISCIPLARIANS

FOUR DISCIPLINARIANS

=====

Which kind are you?

1. LAX LENNY (laughed at)

=====

- * Allows chaos to reign. "after all, they're having fun."
- * Can't control assertive Scouts.
- * Does not stop harassment between Scouts. "After all, boys will be boys."
- * If there ARE rules, they are ignored.
- * Dirty jokes, foul language, disrespect are not corrected.

2. Drill Sergeant Sam (feared)

=====

- * Barely allows any fun!
- * Everything must be orderly, regimented.
- * Proper uniforming is more important than fun.
- * Harsh words and hard discipline are normal.
- * A slip of the tongue brings a stern lecture.

3. Unpredictable Ed (laughed at AND feared - ucler giving)

=====

- * Today - he's Lax Lenny, tonight - Drill Sergeant Sam.
- * Unpredictable, unfair, "plays favorites."
- * Surprises and confuses Scouts by changing the rules without notice.
- * One moment he's screaming, later ignoring the same behavior.
- * No one knows what's "okay."

4. Disciplined Dan (respected, followed, copied)

=====

- * Knows that being CALM, CONSISTENT, FAIR and FRIENDLY is the most successful discipline style.
- * Trains boy leaders in discipline plan and involves them whenever possible.
- * Is FLEXIBLE and FUN, CARING and in control.
- * Inappropriate language or action, brings a non-threatening comment and reminder of what's expected and acceptable.
- * Rewards and praises positive behavior.
- * Everyone knows the rules, the discipline PLAN, knows what's expected and knows what to expect from Dan.

*** Models LIVING the values of the Scout Oath and Law.**

*** Train ALL your troop adults to be "Disciplined Dans."**

Be SURE they know what you (the troop committee) expect.

Discuss, publish and use a clear, simple, flexible discipline plan.

>

From a handout by Alan Anderson, Indianhead Council, St. Paul, Minn.

Date: Wed, 30 Nov 1994 13:39:14 -0600
From: Gregory Benesh <BENESHG@BAYLOR.EDU>
Subject: Re: Knots

Bob,

I don't know what the confusion is--but there was no "interpreting" done on my part about the Commissioner's Key. It's discussed a number of times in the Commissioner's Fieldbook. The Unit Commissioner's Progress Record for the Commissioner's Key and Arrowhead Honor is on p. 39, and the Distinguished Commissioner Service Award is on p. 44. The Unit Commissioners may earn the Commissioner's Key by:

- 1. Completing the three-session training program outlined in the Commissioner Basic Training Manual.**
- 2. Completing personal coaching orientation including orientation projects.**
- 3. Completing 3 years as a registered commissioner within a 5-year period.**
- 4. Earning the Arrowhead Honor Award.**

**YIS,
Greg Benesh**

Date: Wed, 30 Nov 1994 15:39:25 LCL
From: Steve Beluch <steve.beluch@SYSLINK.MCS.COM>
Subject: Knots

**S>I disagree with Greg's interpretation of the Scouter's Key
S>requirements. I believe that only a scoutmaster and a roundtable
S>commissioner can earn it. I will check the details more carefully and
S>get back.**

S> Dr. Robert W. McGwier

**Bob, You're in the ball park. The Scouters Key can only be earned by
the following positions: Scoutmaster, Varsity Coach, Explorer Advisor,
Skipper and Commissioner.
and when you get into the Commissioner arena its set of performance
items for District Commissioners and ADC's, Another for Unit
commissioners and still another for RT commissioners. What he will be
eligible for is: put the two years "IN THE BANK" or start over for the
Training Award (Roundtable Staff) which is really the Arrowhead Award.
The only "Carry over will be the Commissioner Basic Training he
received.**

**I'm sorry that I still have not completed my KNOTTY KNOTS article but
with the Electronic Scouting thread I'm a little busy. Seriously, I
hope to get on it in the next week or so.**

**YiS
Steve Beluch - Des Plaines Valley Council
Berwyn, IL.
Direct E-Mail: steve.beluch@SYSLINK.mcs.com**

*** CmpQwk #UNREG * UNREGISTERED EVALUATION COPY**

Date: Thu, 1 Dec 1994 14:54:09 -0500
From: "Michael S. Holmes" <HolmesWCW@aol.com>
Subject: Re: knots

John Oakes writes that there are no distinctions among the types of commissioners in reference to earning the Arrowhead, Scouter's Key or Distinguished Commissioner Awards.

If you check Commissioner Administration of Unit Service, #34120, pp. 14-15, and Appendix D, you will find that some of the requirements vary from position to position. However, it is unclear whether the tenure requirements imply *continuous* service in the same location. Since we want to give all the encouragement and support we can to our volunteers, I would say that we should be as flexible as possible.

Also, I hate to beat a dead horse, but Greg Benesh's response is a perfect example of a disagreement that need not occur. A quick look at Commissioner Administration... will show that, indeed, Roundtable Commissioners may earn the Key.

**YiS
Michael Holmes, Council Commissioner
SE Wisconsin Council, Inc., BSA**

Date: Thu, 1 Dec 1994 13:25:00 PST
From: "Woltz, Al LTC" <woltza@SHAFTER-EMH3.ARMY.MIL>
Subject: New Award for the Military

For those scouts out there in the US Armed Forces, there is a new military award entitled the "Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal (MOVSM).

It's not really new since it was established by the President via EO 12830 dated 9 January 1993*, but it's just coming to light in terms of implementing instructions. For those in the US Navy, see SECNAV NOTICE 1650

dtd 12 April 1994, and for those in the US Army, see MILPER MEMORANDUM

NUMBER 94-3 dated 1 June 1994. For those in the Air Force, you guys have

too many medals already ;). Actually, you're eligible as well, but I don't know the instruction covering the medal's implementation. The purpose of this

award is recognize "members of the U.S. Armed Forces who distinguished themselves through outstanding community service."

Eligibility requirements are as follows:

" The MOVSM may be awarded to members of the Armed Forces of the United States and their Reserve Components who, subsequent to December 31, 1992, perform outstanding volunteer community service of a sustained, direct and consequential nature.

An individual's service must:

1. be to the civilian community, to include the military family community;
2. be significant in nature and produce tangible results;
3. reflect favorably on the Military Service and the Department of Defense; and
4. be of a sustained and direct nature.

Awarding/approval authorities shall ensure the service to be honored merits the special recognition afforded by this medal. The MOVSM is intended to recognize exceptional community support over time and not a single act or achievement. Further, it is intended to honor direct support of community activities. For the purpose of this award, attending membership meetings or social events of a community service group or attending occasional Scout meetings would not normally be considered qualifying service, while attending a community crisis action phone line or serving 3 years as a Boy or Girl Scout leader would." (The above wording comes from the SECNAV NOTICE. The wording of the Army memorandum is similar but somewhat different)

No more than one MOVSM shall be awarded to any service member, but subsequent periods of community service justifying award of the medal shall be recognized by bronze or silver service stars (silver star will be worn in lieu of a 6th award). The MOVSM will be worn immediately after the Humanitarian Service Medal (in order of precedent). The MOVSM is categorized as a service medal, as such, no orders are issued to announce its approval.

=====
=== LTC Al Woltz | Cub Master, Cub Scout Pack 677, LDS
woltza@shafter-emh3.army.mil | Committee Member, Boy Scout Troop
677, LDS
Ft Shafter, Hawaii | Assistant Scoutmaster, Boy Scout Troop 304
808-833-6599 | Roundtable Staff, Aloha Council
=====
===

Date: Thu, 1 Dec 1994 18:29:32 CST
From: "Settummanque, the blackeagle" <waltoml@WKUVX1.WKU.EDU>
Subject: Re: knots

"Michael S. Holmes" <HolmesWCW@AOL.COM> writes:

>

>John Oakes writes that there are no distinctions among the types of
>commissioners in reference to earning the Arrowhead, Scouter's Key or
>Distinguished Commissioner Awards.

>

>If you check Commissioner Administration of Unit Service, #34120, pp.
14-15,

>and Appendix D, you will find that some of the requirements vary from
>position to position. However, it is unclear whether the tenure
requirements

>imply *continuous* service in the same location. Since we want to give all
>the encouragement and support we can to our volunteers, I would say
that we

>should be as flexible as possible.

But Mike, that is NOT the opinion of FOUR different local Councils.
I've called our local Council, and got one answer; the largest one in
our state, and got another answer, and two others (one south of me and
the other northwest of me) and got two separate but close enough to
each other's answer. This is an example of what many of us have
talked about....the INTERPRETATION of what you read as "policy". Read
onward.

In my local Council (Audubon), a Scouter that have served in one
position (Unit Commissioner) *CAN USE* his 2 years tenure as a
Commissioner toward a training award in another Commissioner (Cub
Roundtable Commissioner Staff), even if there is little other than
tenure that can be transferrable.

In the Bluegrass Council (Lexington), they use the book as a DEFINATE
NO, and they reference the BSA's "Leadership Training: Plans,
Procedures, Materials booklet (BSA #4169) as their reference. On page
21, under the words "tenure", the Council Executive faxed me and read
to me over the phone "Tenure used to earn one key or award CANNOT (my
emphasis) be used to earn another key or award".

In the Middle Tennessee Council (Nashville) and the Buffalo Trace
Councils (Evansville), both stated that it "had to depend on how close

the Scouter was to completing the Key as a Unit Commissioner. If for instance, everything was complete except for the one year tenure that was left...that is, he or she earned the Arrowhead Honor Award, that the units he or she were certified as Quality Units for those two years, and that he or she completed all of the training and coaching assignments, that yes, they would waive the remaining year and award the Key to the Scouter" (and I want to add here, that the training director at Middle Tennessee had a Scouter that was in that same situation, except he became the District Commissioner instead of a member of the staff).

So as you can see, Mike, things are NOT just "as the manual says".

>Also, I hate to beat a dead horse, but Greg Benesh's response is a perfect
>example of a disagreement that need not occur. A quick look at
Commissioner
>Administration.... will show that, indeed, Roundtable Commissioners may
earn
>the Key.

Roundtable COMMISSIONERS, NOT the Roundtable STAFF members. They
earn
the Training Award, whether they are Cub, Scout, or Varsity. Exploring
Service Team/Commissioners and their staffs are the only exception and
they get the Key. Again the reference is the same: the BSA's
Leadership Training: Plans, Procedures, Materials (BSA #4169).

Settummanque!

--

Settummanque, the blackeagle... (MAJ) Mike L. Walton (_____)_
co-Owner, Blackeagle Services

Date: Sun, 4 Dec 1994 00:27:44 -0500 (EST)
From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@cap.gwu.edu>
Subject: BSA: Knots - Tenure
To: Freemason@AOL.COM

Randy,

Our understanding of the tenure requirements is a little different than yours.

- 1. A Scoutmaster, who is also a Cub Scouter can count the same calendar time for work towards the Training Award or Scouter's Key and a Cub Scout award.**
- 2. The same person, however, could not count the same calendar time for both a Webelos Leader Knot and another Cub Scouter knot for work in the Pack.**

We've treated it as though the person has separate existences for each separate registration. And if a person is doing two distinctly separate jobs with more time comitted, why not recognize it.

If there is a hard rule that prevents an individual from gaining tenure credit in two different program areas at the same time, I'm afraid I can't find it. Admittedly this is an area where my library is weak - its heavy on program. Please cite the authority for your statement.

**Speaking only for myself in the Scouting Spirit, Michael F Bowman
Used to be a Beaver, National Capital Area Council, B.S.A.
mfbowman@CAP.GWU.EDU (mfbowman@CAPACCESS.ORG after 12/13/94)**

Date: Sun, 4 Dec 1994 11:20:57 -0500
To: mfbowman@cap.gwu.edu
Subject: Re: BSA: Knots - Tenure

Michael -

You may want to look under the BSA Publication No. 34169"Leadership Training Plans Procedures Materials, page 32. It states: "Tenure used to earn one key or award cannot be used to earn another key or award."

Under "Earning the Awards", it states that "the holder of a Scouter's Key may not go back and earn the award in the same program area." It really does not say anything in this manual about someone who was working toward a Key in one program, but whose Scouting job changed to one where the Training Award is the applicable recognition. This is apparently left open to interpretation by the Council Training Committee.

Now, you are discussing Cub Scout Leader Recognition. There are specific tenure requirements on them, and some concurrent tenure is allowed. I heard this was supposed to be phased out September 1, 1994, but I have not heard anything recently.

Hope this helps.

YiS,

Randy Spradling

Date: Wed, 7 Dec 1994 14:35:35 -0500 (EST)
From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@cap.gwu.edu>
Subject: Re: BSA: Knots - Tenure
To: Freemason@aol.com

Randy,

I understand the basic concept that tenure that is counted towards one award cannot be counted towards another. Its the interpretation that is troubling. Here tenure is determined by registered position. Thus I can in theory have a separate concurrent tenure for each position. The time spent as ASM doesn't count towards a Cub Scouter Award - still have to meet the tenure requirements in that job. The difference is that the two tenure periods could overlap if the person is doing two jobs with two registrations; e.g. ASM from 8/91 - present and Webelos Leader from 8/90 to 8/92. What the rule doesn't say is that a person can only count his total tenure in Scouting for one award at a time, regardless of the number of registered positions. For me it makes no difference, I've been around long enough to accumulate ten knots one at a time and any more are gratis. For some of our volunteers, it helps.

**Speaking only for myself in the Scouting Spirit, Michael F Bowman
Used to be a Beaver, National Capital Area Council, B.S.A.
mfbowman@CAP.GWU.EDU (mfbowman@CAPACCESS.ORG after 12/13/94)**

Date: Mon, 5 Dec 1994 17:39:01 EST
From: Nathan Brindle <NATHAN@LSOFT.COM>
Subject: BSA-CAC College of Commissioner Science (long)

To all interested Scouters:

Crossroads of America Council will hold its 1995 College of Commissioner Science on Saturday, February 25, 1995 at the Fall Creek Valley Middle School in Indianapolis, Indiana. The 1995 College will provide training for all positions of Council and District Commissioner service, and District and Council functions related to Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts and Exploring.

There will be training courses for <all> adult Scouters. The courses offered meet the training requirements for the Commissioner s Arrowhead and Scouter s Key awards. All sessions may not be offered every year. The courses offered will address National Program, Regional/Area emphasis, local Council concerns and other topics pertinent to the attendees.

Food service for lunch will be provided by the college and will be served in the cafeteria of the school. It will be served from noon until 1 P.M. Dinner will be a sit down dinner at 6 P.M at the Castleton United Methodist Church located about two miles from the school.

FEES

**\$26 EARLY BIRD (received before Feb. 15 or postmarked by Feb. 10
\$32 REGULAR FEES (after above dates or at the door)**

You can request a course brochure by calling the Crossroads of America Council at +1 (317) 925-1900 or by writing to the council at 1900 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202.

CURRICULUM GUIDELINES

The function of the College of Commissioner Science is to provide basic and supplemental training for all positions of the council and district commissioner service. Courses offered each year depend on many factors, including our Council s present areas of emphasis, and the interest in specific subjects expressed by previous participants. Unless otherwise stated, each course is worth one credit toward degree completion. The College of Commissioner Science offeres a Doctoral degree to

participants who have a Master of Commissioner Science and have completed advanced studies including a Doctoral Project.

Degree and Certificate Requirements

=====

ASSOCIATE IN COMMISSIONER SCIENCE

Awarded to all non-degree attendees who complete four (4) credits.

BACHELOR OF COMMISSIONER SCIENCE

Awarded to all attendees who complete six (6) credits.

MASTER OF COMMISSIONER SCIENCE

Awarded to all attendees who hold a Bachelor of Commissioner Science and complete six (6) credits.

DOCTOR OF COMMISSIONER SCIENCE

Awarded to those participants who hold a Master of Commissioner Science degree, complete six (6) credits of Doctoral seminars this session (including PHD600, PHD601, PHD602) and complete the Doctoral Thesis or Project. An "All But Dissertation" certificate will be awarded at the completion of the course, with the Doctorate of Commissioner Science Degree awarded at the next College, after approval of the completed thesis or project.

CERTIFICATE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

Awarded to all students who have a Master of Commissioner Science and would like an alternative to the Doctorate degree, or those who have completed the Doctorate degree. It may be awarded upon completion of five (5) credits and may not include basic training courses.

SPECIAL NOTE: Our college recognizes and will accept transfer credits from all Scouting colleges of a similar nature for the Associate and Bachelor of Commissioner Science Degree.

COURSES (Short listing)

=====

*** Department of Commissioner Training**

B101 A Commissioner s View of Unit Administration

B102 Quality Scouting--What it is and how to get it

B103 BSA Objectives and Organization

B104 Knock, Knock...Who s There? (about unit visitation)

A216 Recruiting and Activating Commissioners

A217 Service with a Smile

A218 Know the Rules of the Game

A219 Hiring and Firing Volunteers (double session--2 credits)

S402 On-Time Charter Renewal: Nuts and Bolts (double session--2 credits)
S403 The Two-Hat Commissioner
S408 Getting Them and Keeping Them
S409 Nutrition for Weak Units--Building Muscles (double session--2 credits)
S415 Dress for Success
S419 Personal Support--Motivating and Keeping Volunteers)
S432 Interpersonal Skills

*** Department of Training**

T101 Cub Scout Basic Leader Training (4 Hours--2 Credits)
T103 Roundtable Training for Cubs and Boy Scouts (All Day)
T104 Tried and True Training Techniques (3 hours)
T105 Scout Show Know-How
T106 Ask the Pros

(note--on T103 and T104, the catalog does not indicate how many credits the classes are worth.)

*** Department of District and Council Operations**

D301 Commissioner Service and the District Operations Relationship
D302 Council and District Relationships
D316 The Committee of the 90s
D317 Getting the Chartered Partner Involved
D339 Let Fred Do It (the District Exec)
D340 Financing Scouting

*** Department of Exploring**

E101 Explorer Leader Basic Training (4 hours-2 credits)
E102 Explorer Leader Advanced Training (2 hours--? credits)
E103 The E.P.A.
E104 Conducting a Successful FirstNighter
E105 Ethical Controversies
E106 Post Officers Training

***Department of Doctoral Studies**

PHD600 Thesis or Project Selection
PHD601 Thesis or Project Development

PHD602 Thesis or Project Approval and Workshop
PHD604 How to Deal with Difficult People
PHD605 Time Management for Busy Volunteers
PHD606 Keeping Your Cool
PHD607 Transitions: Before, During and After
PHD608 The Cutting Edge

COLLEGE HISTORY

The Crossroads of America College of Commissioner Science was founded in 1987 as a measurable standard of supplemental training for Commissioners. Since its inception, it has been designed each year to meet the varied and changing needs of the Commissioner Staff in the host Council and surrounding Councils.

The 1987 College offered only a Bachelor of Commissioner Science degree. Beginning in 1988, the College added the Associate, Master and Doctorate degrees, and a Certificate of Post-Graduate Studies to accommodate the increased levels of learning of its participants. Our Doctorate program requires two years for completion. The first year, the candidate completes the course of study and receives the "All But Dissertation" Certificate, and the second year, after completing a thesis or project write-up, receives the Doctor of Commissioner Science.

To date, the Crossroads of America College of Commissioner Science has awarded 342 Bachelor s degrees, 198 Master s degrees, 121 "All but Dissertation" certificates, 31 PhD s and 26 Certificates of Post-Graduate Studies. Degrees have been bestowed upon participants from Arrowhead, Sagamore, Hoosier Trails, Wabash Valley, Lincoln Trails, Greater Cleveland and George Rogers Clark Councils, in addition to Crossroads of America Council.

Guest speakers at the college have included William "Green Bar Bill" Hillcourt, the author of several BSA handbooks, friend of Lord Baden-Powell and first Wood Badge Scoutmaster in the United States; Mr. "Mickey" McCallister, then National BSA Speaker for Scouting, and previously advisor to the President of the United States Foundation for International Scouting; Bill Gephart, then co-anchor, WTHR-Channel 13, Indianapolis; Bill Downs, circulation director for Boys Life Magazine; Judith Erickson, Research Manager for Indiana Youth Institute, designer of the BSA Ethics in Action program; Dick Shephard, then BSA East Central Region Area Four Director; Jim Aikens, then Director of the Indiana Department of Corrections; and John Thomas, BSA National

Commissioner.

Date: Tue, 2 Jan 1996 09:40:18 -0500
From: "Paul H. Brown" <phbrown@CAPACCESS.ORG>
Subject: Re: Unit Commissioners

On Mon, 1 Jan 1996, Mike Montoya wrote:

>
> I've got a question. My SM and I were talking this afternoon and during
> the conversation, he mentioned that our troop doesn't have a unit
> commissioner....(insert pregnant pause here)... He then mentioned that
my
> name had been suggested by our district commissioner. So I asked him
what
> it involved. He couldn't really tell me, other than it would involve
> another meeting every month (an hour+ each way). So my questions are:
>
> What does a Unit Commissioner do?

Some don't do much. Others do lots. But, you probably already guessed that.

A Unit Commissioner is a communications link between the District and the Unit. Lets the Unit know what is going on in the District (as if newsletters didn't do this well enuf), and lets the District know conditions in the unit. What sort of a program is the unit running? Are they participating in popcorn sales, Friends of Scouting, will they recharter on time, is the SM on the verge of burnout and does he have a functioning committee.

Part of what UC does is to act as adviser and "confessor" to the unit leadership. A friend to discuss scout stuff with. Someone who can tell them what other units in the District do when confronted with similar problems, etc.

Another part of the job is auditing the unit's program. Is this a scouting program, or an outdoor recreation program? Are the scouts doing the planning, or is the SM doing the planning? Is there two-deep leadership all the time?

> How much time should it take to do the job right?

>

About an hour a week! :-) Seriously, it depends on the nature of the unit being visited. And on their receptiveness to "outsiders." This can become, as my wife reminds me, one of those "I'm from the government and

I'm here to help you" jobs.

> Hope to hear something I can use to make my decision, because I have a lot

> of irons in the fire already, and would't want to take the job, if I can't

> do it right.

>

IMO, you can't do it right if it is your own unit. You'd be giving yourself advice. Auditing yourself. Helping yourself recharter.

I really think that the UC needs to be a friendly outsider, not just an insider who takes on another "paper" role just because someone thinks that a position on the organization chart needs filling.

The former UC of my son's troop was also the CC and the COR for the troop. As CC, he held no meetings (but, did arrange for BOR). We never saw him in his roles as COR or UC, either. IOW, he held 3 positions because someone thought that the 3 boxes on the org chart should be filled.

Truth to tell, now that I'm UC of the troop, I have conflicts between my feelings as a parent, my loyalty to the troop sponsor, and the job I'm asked to do as UC. I really don't think that the unit wants a UC, because they want to run a recreation program and call it scouting. Thus far, I'm the person who has said, "But, this isn't scouting," to the District.

I'm also UC for another troop for which I'm a true outsider. Prior to my appointment as UC, I knew none of the adults or the youth. I show up to committee or troop meetings once or twice a month. I note whether the SM

or SPL is running things. They ask me what the District is up to. They ask where they can get information on about everything under the sun. (I suppose they're humoring me by giving me things I can help them with?) Frankly, I do a much better job as a UC of this latter troop.

Others' experiences may give them different data to interpret, but IMO a scouter can't do a credible job as UC for his own unit.

YMMV

Paul H. Brown, UC, GW District, National Capital Area Council, BSA
phbrown@capaccess.org

Date: Tue, 2 Jan 1996 12:12:33 -0600
From: Marc Solomon <msolomon@TEK1.TEKNIQ.COM>
Subject: Re: Unit Commissioners

At 09:40 AM 1/2/96 -0500, Paul H. Brown wrote:

>On Mon, 1 Jan 1996, Mike Montoya wrote:

>>

>> He then mentioned that my

>> name had been suggested by our district commissioner. So I asked him
what

>> it involved. He couldn't really tell me, other than it would involve

>> another meeting every month (an hour+ each way). So my questions
are:

>>

>> What does a Unit Commissioner do?

>

What a Unit Commissioner does and what should a Unit Commissioner do
are too

often two completely different things!

Paul is correct on his definition of a Unit Commissioners job as far as he
went. Another role I would include is Unit Resource. As UC, you would act
as a resource for the unit for any questions they might have about policy,
program, recruiting assistance, or local resources (i.e., camping, high
adventure, ...). I spend much of my time looking for answers to assist my
units.

>> How much time should it take to do the job right?

>About an hour a week! :-). Seriously, it depends on the nature of the

>unit being visited. And on their receptiveness to "outsiders." This can

>become, as my wife reminds me, one of those "I'm from the government
and

>I'm here to help you" jobs.

Again Paul is correct, but let me add that some units need more time than
others. If a unit is working well, then all it should take is a few hours

each month to visit them, update yourself on their status, and update them on district events. If a unit is having troubles, then more time might be needed to assist the unit. I should also add that there is (usually) a monthly commissioners meeting you SHOULD attend as UC and you SHOULD also attend the roundtables.

>IMO, you can't do it right if it is your own unit. You'd be giving >yourself advice. Auditing yourself. Helping yourself recharter.

As a policy, my district does not allow Scouters to be UC of units they are involved with (or were involved with). Many of the reasons (if not all) that Paul mentioned is the reason for that policy. In some of the more rural areas of our district, we do break this policy due to the inability to find someone from outside that unit who can conveniently do the job.

Let me add the following comments about being a Unit Commissioner.

About a

year and a half ago, I became a UC. I was assigned one unit and it was going well. My work load was very light and I was bored to death. Later, I was assigned a second unit, and it was having troubles (at least its CC thought so). This required more of my time and I discovered that, as a UC, I had little direct power to change the problems I see. A UC can only report problems to the district but has no (direct) power to really change things in the unit. This was very frustrating and discouraging to me. What I learned in the long run, though, was that although I had little direct power to change things, I could still make a difference within a unit by honing up my interpersonal skills (a new challenge for me!).

I am now the UC for three units. All three units are doing well (some better than others). As UC, I spend one to three evenings a month visiting my units, one evening a month calling their leaders, one evening each month

at the commissioners meeting and one evening a month at the roundtable. That accounts for 7 to 11 hours each month spent as Unit Commissioner or about two to three hours a week.

The commissioners staff is the backbone of every council. They relay information from the council and the district to the units and from the units to the district and the council. Without the input of the commissioners staff, all decisions made by a council or district are pure

guess work.

Furthermore, a Unit Commissioners job is usually a thankless one. Usually a Scouter knows when he is doing a good job by the faces of the Scouts he works with. He (or she) gets immediate feedback and the thrill of watching the Scouts develop in front of them. As a Unit Commissioner, one does not get this. If there is anything I miss about being a Scouter on the Unit level, it would have to be working with the Scouts directly.

YiS,

Marc W. Solomon Unit Commissioner
msolomon@tek1.tekniq.com Sycamore District
marcsol@aol.com Blackhawk Council, IL

I use to be a wise old owl . . . Now I am just old

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+-----+-----+
| Marc W. Solomon            | TEKnique, Inc.            |
| msolomon@tek1.tekniq.com | Phone: (708) 706-9700 |
|                                    | Fax: (708) 706-9735 |
+-----+-----+
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Date: Wed, 3 Jan 1996 21:00:21 EST
From: "Ernest R. Spradling" <102736.1372@COMPUSERVE.COM>
Subject: Re: Unit Commissioners

On Tue, 2 Jan 1996 12:12:33 -0600 Marc Solomon
<msolomon@TEK1.TEKNIQ.COM> wrote in response to
Paul H. Brown's response to Mike Montoya:

>>>...So I asked him what it involved. He couldn't really tell me,
>>> other than it would involve another meeting every month
>>> (an hour+ each way). So my questions are:
>>> What does a Unit Commissioner do?
<snip>

> Paul is correct on his defintion of a Unit Commissioners job as far as he
> went. Another role I would include is Unit Resource. As UC, you would
act
> as a resource for the unit for any questions they might have about policy,

> program, recruiting assistance, or local resources (i.e., camping, high
> adventure, ...). I spend much of my time looking for answers to assist my
units.

This is one of the most effective jobs a commissioner can do - give
something
useful to the unit(s) you work with. My experience has shown that if you
bring
some useful info, like a brochure on the Conservation Good Turn, for
example,
your presence will be more welcome.

>>> How much time should it take to do the job right?

>> About an hour a week! :-) Seriously, it depends on the nature of the
>> unit being visited. And on their receptiveness to "outsiders."
<snip>

The Unit Commissioner's job is the closest to the "hour a week" you were
promised when you signed up. You need to spend your first six months
observing the unit - keep your mouth shut unless asked questions, and
before
answering, whether you know the answer or not, tell them you will get
back
to them. Then do it promptly. You won't come off as a know-it-all, and
they
may
be more receptive to the information after a short wait.

> Again Paul is correct, but let me add that some units need more time
than
> others. If a unit is working well, then all it should take is a few hours
> each month to visit them, update yourself on their status, and update
them
> on district events. If a unit is having troubles, then more time might be
> needed to assist the unit. I should also add that there is (usually) a
> monthly commissioner's meeting you SHOULD attend as UC and you
SHOULD
> also attend the roundtables.

A well-run unit usually requires about an hour or two of observation each
month.

Add to that an evening for District Commissioner Staff meeting, and Roundtable.

Although attendance at the Staff Meeting and Roundtables are not necessarily mandatory (your district Commissioner may have a different policy on this), the Staff meeting is a good training ground for your new Commissioner job, and your attendance at Roundtable will go a long way when you are trying to encourage your unit leaders to attend.

>> IMO, you can't do it right if it is your own unit. You'd be giving >> yourself advice. Auditing yourself. Helping yourself recharter.

Sorta like the fox guarding the henhouse :) In reality, the Commissioner is supposed to help the unit recharter on time, and needs to keep in constant touch with the responsible rechartering person. I do agree that the ties should be broken, or considerably limited.

> As a policy, my district does not allow Scouters to be UC of units they are > involved with (or were involved with). Many of the reasons (if not all) > that Paul mentioned is the reason for that policy. In some of the more > rural areas of our district, we do break this policy due to the inability to > find someone from outside that unit who can conveniently do the job.

I have seen the unit/commissioner assignments vary. IMHBCO, a commissioner is most effective with a unit that the commissioner does not have a prior relationship.

You know, "a prophet is not without honor except in his own country." The commissioner's suggestions will be taken more seriously if from a "relative stranger."

> Let me add the following comments about being a Unit Commissioner...<snip>

> ...and I discovered that, as a UC, I had little direct power to change the > problems I see.

I had about a ten year hiatus from Scouting before becoming a Unit Commissioner.

I knew from the start that my job was not to run the unit, but to give a helping

hand <when asked>. I have been a commissioner almost four years now, with three as a Unit Commissioner and one as an Assistant District Commissioner. I am currently a Troop Commissioner (a Unit Commissioner who specializes in working only with Boy Scout Troops).

- > A UC can only report problems to the district but has no (direct) power
- > to really change things in the unit. <snip>

Actually, the only reporting "to the District" is through the staff meetings, where the "problem" is discussed to determine the most effective course of action. This is another case of "using your resources," your colleagues in the Commissioner Staff.

- > I am now the UC for three units. All three units are doing well (some
- > better than others). As UC, I spend one to three evenings a month
- visiting
- > my units, one evening a month calling their leaders, one evening each
- month
- > at the commissioners meeting and one evening a month at the
- roundtable.
- > That accounts for 7 to 11 hours each month spent as Unit Commissioner
- or
- > about two to three hours a week.

This is about the optimum effort needed as a Unit Commissioner. It is also the ideal workload for a Unit Commissioner - less than three units, there is too much of a tendency to "nit-pick" the assigned units, and seeing problems where none really exist. Any more than that, and the commissioner is spread too thin. Of course, this applies to "Unit Commissioners" - the "administrative commissioners," (Assistant and District Commissioners) are responsible for many more than three units, but they have help: you guessed it - the Unit Commissioners.

- > The commissioners staff is the backbone of every council. They relay
- > information from the council and the district to the units and from the

- > units to the district and the council. Without the input of the
- > commissioners staff, all decisions made by a council or district are pure
- > guess work.

The Commissioner staff also tends to overlap their jobs with functions that are more appropriate for District Committee members, because that is, in lots of cases, the only way the District and Council programs get carried out. They do most of the dog-body work.

- > Furthermore, a Unit Commissioners job is usually a thankless one. Usually a
- > Scouter knows when he is doing a good job by the faces of the Scouts he
- > works with. He (or she) gets immediate feedback and the thrill of watching
- > the Scouts develop in front of them. As a Unit Commissioner, one does not
- > get this. If there is anything I miss about being a Scouter on the Unit
- > level, it would have to be working with the Scouts directly.

I would encourage all unit leaders to take a hitch as a Commissioner some time in their Scouting careers. This would give them a growing appreciation of the job, that commissioners are not supernumeraries who interfere with their units' programs. Besides, observing other units may give them ideas they can use in another unit.

YiS, WWW,
Randy Spradling, P.E.
Troop Commissioner
Arrowhead District Simon Kenton Council
(and a good ole Owl, too!)
<Freemason@AOL.com>

Date: Wed, 3 Jan 1996 23:29:12 -0500
From: "James A. Sheckels" <JASHECKELS@AOL.COM>
Subject: Re: Unit Commissioners

In Randy Spradling's post he mentions the administrative commissioners as

District and Assistant District Commissioners. Actually, the Administrative Commissioners are Assistant Council and Assistant District Commissioners, and Roundtable staff. The District Commissioner is a PRIMARY "line" leader (as is the Council Commissioner and Unit Commissioner). You can keep them straight by remembering the administrative positions have a gold (or yellow) wreath, the primary or line Commissioners have a silver wreath. The wreath of SERVICE, a Commissioner's main function - SERVICE (note that a District Exec also wears a silver wreath - a SERVICE wreath!).

A commissioner is not there mainly to help the unit recharter on time. The job is to administer the ANNUAL SERVICE PLN, which is a year round full-time plan, not the annual re-charter process. This plan includes the Roundtables/Huddles, unit visitation, encouraging training attendance, attending training, etc, etc.

IMO, a Commissioner (ANY Commissioner) who does not attend Roundtable/Huddle cannot effectively perform the duties of the job. And those who are Council/Assistant Council Commissioners, District Commissioners, and CS/BS RT or Huddle Commissioners should go to the monthly Council Conference of Commissioners to do their job.

If you are a Commissioner and you want to wear the wreath, give the SERVICE.

You want to wear the Arrowhead, give EXCELLENCE to your committment (it's in the name!).

Oops, preaching again (it is free still ;-)). Let me qualify: Adult leader since 75, that's 20 years (I know, it is all the fingers and toes I have, don't know what to do now). Of that I have spent 3 as a Unit Commissioner, 4 as a District Commissioner, 2 as an Assistant Council Commissioner, 3 as Assistant District Commissioner, and 2 on Roundtable (yep, 14 years, unless I missed a toe). Other 5 were 2.5 as Scoutmaster, 2 as Asst SM, and odd months

as District or Unit Committee member. And one National Jambo on sub-camp
Commissioner SERVICE staff. I also got a Doctorate of Commissioner
Sciences
and Masters of Roundtable Sciences, several completions of Arrowheads,
and
two Distinguished Commissioner District and Asst Council). So I know just
a
little about Commissioner SERVICE, but I'm still having fun learning!

As an adult not working directly with youth, there is no better or more
rewarding job than that of a Commissioner. Believe it! (Well, maybe
Training
Team comes close).

The best advice I could give any Commissioner: 1. If you don't know, say
you
don't know. Then go find out the RIGHT answer and get back to the unit
ASAP.

Never, ever, NEVER try to bull your way through. You will not be welcome
back. Bank on it. 2. ALWAYS bring something for the unit - info, a flyer,
new badge requirements, but not the proverbial "clipboard". 3. Be a
friend,
we need of those we can get.
YIS Jim Sheckels I used to be a Bobwhite....

Date: Thu, 4 Jan 1996 08:59:25 CST
From: Greg Helle <GAHELLE@CVM01.VM.IASTATE.EDU>
Subject: Re: Unit Commissioners

Although I can agree in theory that a unit commissioner should break
ties with the unit, I strongly suggest that a unit commissioner tied
with the troop is better than no commissioner.

I am a unit commissioner for my troop...also an ASM and past SM. Our
prior commissioner did not attend council or district functions and
would only attend troop activities or committee meetings when forced
to. This was not support or service to the troop. I can at least
make sure that the troop is aware of activities, rule changes, and
advise them on policy.

This would be different if there were more scouters who wanted to be
commissioners. Our district has not been able to offer every unit a

commissioner for years. Therefore, although the theory is good, in practice a commissioner tied to the troop is much better than no commissioner.

YIS

Greg Helle
ASM, UC, District Camping Chair
I used to be a buffalo.....

Date: Thu, 4 Jan 1996 09:11:47 MST
From: Carol Breuer <CBreuer@VINES.COLOSTATE.EDU>
Subject: Commissioner's Job

I've been reading the posts on what a commissioner's job includes, and would like to add my 2 cents.

One thing that I have not seen mentioned is that a unit commissioner's unit visit can, and I feel that it should, include visiting the unit's committee meetings. As a commissioner I feel I learn more about how the unit is working and what problems they face by sitting in on their committee meeting.

It can't take the place of visiting pack or troop meetings. Those are important for seeing how the program serves the boys, but I find the committee meetings are a good place to serve as a resource when questions

come up, and give opportunities to get to know the adult leaders better, and

not just the ones who are at the troop meetings. Also, as an ADC now supervizing several unit commissioners, I encourage them to periodically visit a committee meeting, and those who do find it very informative.

I thoroughly enjoy my role as a commissioner. The job is what you make it.

I find plenty of opportunities to get acquainted with the adults and youth in

my units, and I find I enjoy spending the time it takes to do the unit visits. I serve as unit commissioner to two troops, and have made it know that I enjoy being included on campouts. I have camped with both troops and

find that is another good way to see how the program is being run, as well as

having the fun myself of enjoying the outing. In commissioner training we

try to emphasize that a commissioner is to be a friend to their units, as well as advisor and observer, and doctor when needed. It helps when problem situations arise (and even good units have problems), if the leaders see you as a friend they can turn to for help, and can feel that you are concerned with helping them find a solution.

Sorry, . . . didn't mean to get on a soapbox, but I feel a good commissioner can really make a difference in this program.

YiS,
Carol Breuer, Fort Collins, CO
Asst. District Commissioner
. . . I used to be an eagle, NC-155

Date: Sun, 28 Jan 1996 00:07:15 -0500 (EST)
From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@CapAccess.org>
To: SCOUTS-L - Youth Groups Discussion List <SCOUTS-L@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU>
Subject: Re: Help for a new UC

Jim,

Your mention of two sides and mediating sounds like there is more to the story than what you could relate in an e-mail. Is there more going on than just poorly organized meetings? For example, is there a growing rift between factions of parents who are wrestling for control over the unit?

Generally I would advise any Unit Commissioner approaching something like this that:

1. First and foremost you should be in a listening mode and find out all that you can about the unit before responding too quickly. Knowing who is who, personalities, etc. can be invaluable. Likewise it helps to find out whether there have been past problems in a unit - this might be the continuation of something that already has been addressed and needs a different approach. It sounds like you have already gotten a firm start in this area by talking with the past Cubmaster. I'm curious though why it was necessary to write a letter to the present Cubmaster. Was he/she unavailable by telephone? Normally formalizing to this degree can be confused with supervising versus advising, which I am sure is not what you intended.

2. Be cautious in your approach. A Unit Commissioner is an advisor and conduit for information there to serve the unit. You have to be careful not to cross into the area where it appears that you are asserting any kind of authority over the unit. From your posting it sounds like you recognized this instinctively, but it never hurts to keep evaluating how others will see your actions. In the meeting you have scheduled your idea of explaining your role is an excellent idea, it will go a long way towards putting oil on the water, if anyone thought you were trying to take charge.

3. Remember that you can leave the problem, but the unit has to live with the results. The people in the unit should be the ones who have

ownership over the solution. If they are not, the solution will not have a very long life. Meetings to come head-to-head on an issue can be useful, but sometimes you may want to consider whether it is better to be more of a behind-the-scenes advisor, letting the unit play more of a role. You might, for example, coach the Committee Chair on the basics of Scouting, run through fast start tapes, answer many questions, and then work on what he/she could do to facilitate change, helping him/her to develop several alternatives to present to the Pack Committee.

In your situation, you already have a meeting set that will compress things a bit. Could you meet with the chairman ahead of the meeting, say at his house to do a bit of coaching before hand. This could do a lot to keep you more in the background during the meeting allowing the unit to address its problems with more ownership.

4. Recognize that as dedicated and excited about having a great program as we are, not everyone will understand things as well as you would like and from time to time there will be things that don't meet your expectations. Some units are going to have problems that take a long time to resolve. Sometimes a problem may defy solution or seem to. It will be tempting to try to jump in and fix things. Sometimes it is better to ask questions, present alternatives, explain why some alternatives are good and note problems, etc. The committee may make mistakes or not follow your advice. That is okay. It is bound to happen to some degree. Remember to praise publically any good result and wait for private opportunities to offer helpful constructive criticism. By being a warm and positive advisor you will probably be welcome back, where another who was too critical may be regarded by both sides as an unwelcome meddler.

5. Sit back and watch, wait to be asked for help. In your pre-meeting get together with the Committee Chair you can work out some signals for when to jump in or arrange for the Chair to ask specific questions. If you've been asked, the answers are usually better received than if you've asserted a position intrusively.

6. Bring some donuts or snacks to the meeting. Shake everyone's hand and take a minute to thank them for being in Scouting. Smile. Smile. Smile. Laugh. Listen. Engage in a few words of chat to learn about each person. Try to remember names.

7. When you speak, thank them for the opportunity to be their guest. Act as a guest.

8. If you sense that the committee needs some time to hammer out something without an outsider present, excuse yourself to make a telephone call, hit the head, take a walk cause your knee is stiff, etc. and return when you judge it wise.

9. When asked an opinion, give alternatives without value judgments on any of the people in the unit and take a second to praise anything positive that comes to mind. Sweeten the medicine. Close any comment by returning the ball to their court; e.g. now those are my thoughts. I know that you know more about this Pack than I do and what will work or not. Maybe some of the rest of you have some ideas and suggestions too. After everyone has made suggestions, I'm sure you can pick the ones that will work best for you. Sit back and enjoy.

10. Before leaving thank everyone again for being allowed to be a guest and for their support of Scouting. Add a few words of encouragement, invite them to the next District event, and thank them again. Let them know that you are available to help via the Committee Chair and Cubmaster (this is important - nobody likes to be undercut). Passing out Scouter cards to everyone at the meeting is not a good idea for this kind of meeting.

11. After the meeting, review the situation with your Assistant District Commissioner or District Commissioner. Be honest and invite critical comment. Figure out the best plan for follow-up.

12. Follow-up on whatever happens. This may be a long process of nudging success, which seems to work best anyway.

Jim, I know you are a dedicated Scouter facing a tough situation and wish you every success in bringing things to a good resolution. Let us know how things turn out. It is through situations like this that we all learn more of what works and what does not. Even a complete "failure" at such a meeting, really never is a "failure", but instead an opportunity for learning and re-evaluation. And successes are always great to hear about. I'd wish you good luck too, but somehow I don't think you'll need any luck. :-)

Speaking Only for Myself in the Scouting Spirit, Michael F. Bowman

a/k/a Professor Beaver (WB), ASTA #2566, OA Vigil Honor '71, Eagle Scout '67, Serving as Deputy District Commissioner for Training, G.W.Dist., Nat. Capital Area Council, BSA - mfbowman@capaccess.org

From <@pucc.PRINCETON.EDU:owner-scouts-l@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU> Tue Jan 2 09:45:19 1996

Return-Path: <@pucc.PRINCETON.EDU:owner-scouts-l@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU>

Received: from pucc.PRINCETON.EDU (smtpd@pucc.Princeton.EDU [128.112.129.99]) by cap1.CapAccess.org (8.6.12/8.6.10) with SMTP id JAA16550; Tue, 2 Jan 1996 09:45:19 -0500

Received: from PUCC.PRINCETON.EDU by pucc.PRINCETON.EDU (IBM VM SMTP V2R2)

with BSMTP id 8383; Tue, 02 Jan 96 09:43:48 EST

Received: from TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU (NJE origin MAILER@TCUBVM) by PUCC.PRINCETON.EDU (LMail V1.2a/1.8a) with BSMTP id 1388; Tue, 2 Jan 1996 09:43:46 -0500

Received: from TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU (NJE origin LISTSERV@TCUBVM) by TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU (LMail V1.2a/1.8a) with BSMTP id 3024; Tue, 2 Jan 1996 08:39:36 -0600

Received: from TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU by TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU (LISTSERV release 1.8b)

with NJE id 3020 for SCOUTS-L@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU; Tue, 2 Jan 1996

08:39:04 -0600

Received: from TCUBVM (NJE origin SMTP@TCUBVM) by TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU (LMail

V1.2a/1.8a) with BSMTP id 3019; Tue, 2 Jan 1996 08:39:03 -0600

Received: from cap1.CapAccess.org by tcubvm.is.tcu.edu (IBM VM SMTP V2R2) with

TCP; Tue, 02 Jan 96 08:39:00 CST

Received: (from phbrown@localhost) by cap1.CapAccess.org (8.6.12/8.6.10) id

JAA15027; Tue, 2 Jan 1996 09:40:18 -0500

MIME-Version: 1.0

Content-Type: TEXT/PLAIN; charset=US-ASCII

Message-ID: <Pine.SUN.3.91-FP.960102092457.9306A-100000@cap1.capaccess.org>

Date: Tue, 2 Jan 1996 09:40:18 -0500

Reply-To: SCOUTS-L - Youth Groups Discussion List
<SCOUTS-L@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU>

Sender: SCOUTS-L - Youth Groups Discussion List
<SCOUTS-L@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU>

From: "Paul H. Brown" <phbrown@CAPACCESS.ORG>

Subject: Re: Unit Commissioners
To: Multiple recipients of list SCOUTS-L <SCOUTS-L@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU>
In-Reply-To: <199601020731.XAA28186@ims.mariposa.ca.us>
Status: RO
X-Status:

On Mon, 1 Jan 1996, Mike Montoya wrote:

>
> I've got a question. My SM and I were talking this afternoon and during
> the conversation, he mentioned that our troop doesn't have a unit
> commissioner....(insert pregnant pause here)... He then mentioned that
my
> name had been suggested by our district commissioner. So I asked him
what
> it involved. He couldn't really tell me, other than it would involve
> another meeting every month (an hour+ each way). So my questions are:
>
> What does a Unit Commissioner do?

Some don't do much. Others do lots. But, you probably already guessed that.

A Unit Commissioner is a communications link between the District and the Unit. Lets the Unit know what is going on in the District (as if newsletters didn't do this well enuf), and lets the District know conditions in the unit. What sort of a program is the unit running? Are they participating in popcorn sales, Friends of Scouting, will they recharter on time, is the SM on the verge of burnout and does he have a functioning committee.

Part of what UC does is to act as adviser and "confessor" to the unit leadership. A friend to discuss scout stuff with. Someone who can tell them what other units in the District do when confronted with similar problems, etc.

Another part of the job is auditing the unit's program. Is this a scouting program, or an outdoor recreation program? Are the scouts doing the planning, or is the SM doing the planning? Is there two-deep leadership all the time?

> How much time should it take to do the job right?

>

About an hour a week! :-) Seriously, it depends on the nature of the

unit being visited. And on their receptiveness to "outsiders." This can become, as my wife reminds me, one of those "I'm from the government and

I'm here to help you" jobs.

> Hope to hear something I can use to make my decision, because I have a lot

> of irons in the fire already, and would't want to take the job, if I can't

> do it right.

>

IMO, you can't do it right if it is your own unit. You'd be giving yourself advice. Auditing yourself. Helping yourself recharter.

I really think that the UC needs to be a friendly outsider, not just an insider who takes on another "paper" role just because someone thinks that a position on the organization chart needs filling.

The former UC of my son's troop was also the CC and the COR for the troop. As CC, he held no meetings (but, did arrange for BOR). We never saw him in his roles as COR or UC, either. IOW, he held 3 positions because someone thought that the 3 boxes on the org chart should be filled.

Truth to tell, now that I'm UC of the troop, I have conflicts between my feelings as a parent, my loyalty to the troop sponsor, and the job I'm asked to do as UC. I really don't think that the unit wants a UC, because they want to run a recreation program and call it scouting. Thus far, I'm the person who has said, "But, this isn't scouting," to the District.

I'm also UC for another troop for which I'm a true outsider. Prior to my appointment as UC, I knew none of the adults or the youth. I show up to committee or troop meetings once or twice a month. I note whether the SM

or SPL is running things. They ask me what the District is up to. They ask where they can get information on about everything under the sun. (I suppose they're humoring me by giving me things I can help them with?) Frankly, I do a much better job as a UC of this latter troop.

Others' experiences may give them different data to interpret, but IMO a scouter can't do a credible job as UC for his own unit.

YMMV

**Paul H. Brown, UC, GW District, National Capital Area Council, BSA
phbrown@capaccess.org**

**From <@pucc.PRINCETON.EDU:owner-scouts-l@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU> Tue
Jan 2 13:17:39 1996**

Return-Path: <@pucc.PRINCETON.EDU:owner-scouts-l@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU>

**Received: from pucc.PRINCETON.EDU (smtpb@pucc.Princeton.EDU
[128.112.129.99]) by cap1.CapAccess.org (8.6.12/8.6.10) with SMTP id
NAA04197; Tue, 2 Jan 1996 13:17:39 -0500**

**Received: from PUCC.PRINCETON.EDU by pucc.PRINCETON.EDU (IBM VM
SMTP V2R2)**

with BSMTP id 0329; Tue, 02 Jan 96 13:16:08 EST

**Received: from TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU (NJE origin MAILER@TCUBVM) by
PUCC.PRINCETON.EDU (LMail V1.2a/1.8a) with BSMTP id 0440; Tue, 2 Jan
1996 13:16:07 -0500**

**Received: from TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU (NJE origin LISTSERV@TCUBVM) by
TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU (LMail V1.2a/1.8a) with BSMTP id 4530; Tue,
2 Jan 1996 12:11:27 -0600**

**Received: from TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU by TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU (LISTSERV
release 1.8b)**

**with NJE id 4524 for SCOUTS-L@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU; Tue, 2 Jan
1996**

12:10:51 -0600

**Received: from TCUBVM (NJE origin SMTP@TCUBVM) by
TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU (LMail**

V1.2a/1.8a) with BSMTP id 4523; Tue, 2 Jan 1996 12:10:50 -0600

**Received: from garcon.ais.net by tcubvm.is.tcu.edu (IBM VM SMTP V2R2)
with TCP;**

Tue, 02 Jan 96 12:10:48 CST

**Received: from tek1.tekniq.com (tek1.tekniq.com [198.62.139.3]) by
garcon.ais.net (8.6.12/8.6.9) with SMTP id MAA26621 for
<SCOUTS-L@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU>; Tue, 2 Jan 1996 12:11:07 -0600**

**Received: from tek34 ([198.62.139.34]) by tek1.tekniq.com (4.1/SMI-4.1)
id**

AA07584; Tue, 2 Jan 96 12:15:11 CST

X-Sender: msolomon@tek1.tekniq.com

X-Mailer: Windows Eudora Light Version 1.5.2

Mime-Version: 1.0

Content-Type: text/plain; charset="us-ascii"

Message-ID: <9601021815.AA07584@tek1.tekniq.com>

Date: Tue, 2 Jan 1996 12:12:33 -0600

Reply-To: SCOUTS-L - Youth Groups Discussion List

<SCOUTS-L@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU>
Sender: SCOUTS-L - Youth Groups Discussion List
<SCOUTS-L@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU>
From: Marc Solomon <msolomon@TEK1.TEKNIQ.COM>
Subject: Re: Unit Commissioners
To: Multiple recipients of list SCOUTS-L <SCOUTS-L@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU>
Status: RO
X-Status:

At 09:40 AM 1/2/96 -0500, Paul H. Brown wrote:

>On Mon, 1 Jan 1996, Mike Montoya wrote:

>>

>> He then mentioned that my

>> name had been suggested by our district commissioner. So I asked him what

>> it involved. He couldn't really tell me, other than it would involve

>> another meeting every month (an hour+ each way). So my questions are:

>>

>> What does a Unit Commissioner do?

>

What a Unit Commissioner does and what should a Unit Commissioner do are too

often two completely different things!

Paul is correct on his definition of a Unit Commissioners job as far as he went. Another role I would include is Unit Resource. As UC, you would act as a resource for the unit for any questions they might have about policy, program, recruiting assistance, or local resources (i.e., camping, high adventure, ...). I spend much of my time looking for answers to assist my units.

>> How much time should it take to do the job right?

>About an hour a week! :-) Seriously, it depends on the nature of the

>unit being visited. And on their receptiveness to "outsiders." This can

>become, as my wife reminds me, one of those "I'm from the government and

>I'm here to help you" jobs.

Again Paul is correct, but let me add that some units need more time than others. If a unit is working well, then all it should take is a few hours

each month to visit them, update yourself on their status, and update them on district events. If a unit is having troubles, then more time might be needed to assist the unit. I should also add that there is (usually) a monthly commissioners meeting you SHOULD attend as UC and you SHOULD also attend the roundtables.

>IMO, you can't do it right if it is your own unit. You'd be giving >yourself advice. Auditing yourself. Helping yourself recharter.

As a policy, my district does not allow Scouters to be UC of units they are involved with (or were involved with). Many of the reasons (if not all) that Paul mentioned is the reason for that policy. In some of the more rural areas of our district, we do break this policy due to the inability to find someone from outside that unit who can conveniently do the job.

Let me add the following comments about being a Unit Commissioner.

About a

year and a half ago, I became a UC. I was assigned one unit and it was going well. My work load was very light and I was bored to death. Later, I was assigned a second unit, and it was having troubles (at least its CC thought so). This required more of my time and I discovered that, as a UC, I had little direct power to change the problems I see. A UC can only report problems to the district but has no (direct) power to really change things in the unit. This was very frustrating and discouraging to me. What I learned in the long run, though, was that although I had little direct power to change things, I could still make a difference within a unit by honing up my interpersonal skills (a new challenge for me!).

I am now the UC for three units. All three units are doing well (some better than others). As UC, I spend one to three evenings a month visiting my units, one evening a month calling their leaders, one evening each month

at the commissioners meeting and one evening a month at the roundtable. That accounts for 7 to 11 hours each month spent as Unit Commissioner or about two to three hours a week.

The commissioners staff is the backbone of every council. They relay information from the council and the district to the units and from the units to the district and the council. Without the input of the commissioners staff, all decisions made by a council or district are pure

guess work.

Furthermore, a Unit Commissioners job is usually a thankless one. Usually a Scouter knows when he is doing a good job by the faces of the Scouts he works with. He (or she) gets immediate feedback and the thrill of watching the Scouts develop in front of them. As a Unit Commissioner, one does not get this. If there is anything I miss about being a Scouter on the Unit level, it would have to be working with the Scouts directly.

YiS,

Marc W. Solomon Unit Commissioner
msolomon@tek1.tekniq.com Sycamore District
marcsol@aol.com Blackhawk Council, IL

I use to be a wise old owl . . . Now I am just old

```
+-----+-----+
| Marc W. Solomon            | TEKnique, Inc.            |
| msolomon@tek1.tekniq.com | Phone: (708) 706-9700 |
|                              | Fax: (708) 706-9735 |
+-----+-----+
```

From <@pucc.PRINCETON.EDU:owner-scouts-l@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU> Wed
Jan 3 21:10:27 1996
Return-Path: <@pucc.PRINCETON.EDU:owner-scouts-l@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU>
Received: from pucc.PRINCETON.EDU (smtpc@pucc.Princeton.EDU
[128.112.129.99]) by cap1.CapAccess.org (8.6.12/8.6.10) with SMTP id
VAA26252; Wed, 3 Jan 1996 21:10:27 -0500
Received: from PUCC.PRINCETON.EDU by pucc.PRINCETON.EDU (IBM VM
SMTP V2R2)
with BSMTP id 1898; Wed, 03 Jan 96 21:09:06 EST
Received: from TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU (NJE origin MAILER@TCUBVM) by
PUCC.PRINCETON.EDU (LMail V1.2a/1.8a) with BSMTP id 5421; Wed, 3 Jan
1996 21:09:06 -0500
Received: from TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU (NJE origin LISTSERV@TCUBVM) by
TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU (LMail V1.2a/1.8a) with BSMTP id 8654; Wed,
3 Jan 1996 20:03:26 -0600
Received: from TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU by TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU (LISTSERV
release 1.8b)

with NJE id 8650 for SCOUTS-L@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU; Wed, 3 Jan 1996

20:02:44 -0600

Received: from TCUBVM (NJE origin SMTP@TCUBVM) by TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU (LMail

V1.2a/1.8a) with BSMTP id 8649; Wed, 3 Jan 1996 20:02:42 -0600

Received: from dub-img-4.compuserve.com by tcubvm.is.tcu.edu (IBM VM SMTP V2R2)

with TCP; Wed, 03 Jan 96 20:02:38 CST

Received: by dub-img-4.compuserve.com (8.6.10/5.950515) id VAA20723; Wed, 3 Jan

1996 21:02:59 -0500

Message-ID: <960104020020_102736.1372_GHT47-1@CompuServe.COM>

Date: Wed, 3 Jan 1996 21:00:21 EST

Reply-To: SCOUTS-L - Youth Groups Discussion List
<SCOUTS-L@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU>

Sender: SCOUTS-L - Youth Groups Discussion List
<SCOUTS-L@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU>

From: "Ernest R. Spradling" <102736.1372@COMPUSERVE.COM>

Subject: Re: Unit Commissioners

To: Multiple recipients of list SCOUTS-L <SCOUTS-L@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU>

Status: RO

X-Status: D

On Tue, 2 Jan 1996 12:12:33 -0600 Marc Solomon
<msolomon@TEK1.TEKNIQ.COM> wrote in response to
Paul H. Brown's response to Mike Montoya:

>>>...So I asked him what it involved. He couldn't really tell me,
>>> other than it would involve another meeting every month
>>> (an hour+ each way). So my questions are:
>>> What does a Unit Commissioner do?
<snip>

> Paul is correct on his definition of a Unit Commissioners job as far as he
> went. Another role I would include is Unit Resource. As UC, you would
act
> as a resource for the unit for any questions they might have about policy,
> program, recruiting assistance, or local resources (i.e., camping, high
> adventure, ...). I spend much of my time looking for answers to assist my
units.

This is one of the most effective jobs a commissioner can do - give something useful to the unit(s) you work with. My experience has shown that if you bring some useful info, like a brochure on the Conservation Good Turn, for example, your presence will be more welcome.

>>> How much time should it take to do the job right?

**>> About an hour a week! :-) Seriously, it depends on the nature of the unit being visited. And on their receptiveness to "outsiders."
<snip>**

The Unit Commissioner's job is the closest to the "hour a week" you were promised when you signed up. You need to spend your first six months observing the unit - keep your mouth shut unless asked questions, and before answering, whether you know the answer or not, tell them you will get back to them. Then do it promptly. You won't come off as a know-it-all, and they may be more receptive to the information after a short wait.

> Again Paul is correct, but let me add that some units need more time than others. If a unit is working well, then all it should take is a few hours each month to visit them, update yourself on their status, and update them on district events. If a unit is having troubles, then more time might be needed to assist the unit. I should also add that there is (usually) a monthly commissioner's meeting you SHOULD attend as UC and you SHOULD also attend the roundtables.

A well-run unit usually requires about an hour or two of observation each month. Add to that an evening for District Commissioner Staff meeting, and Roundtable. Although attendance at the Staff Meeting and Roundtables are not necessarily

mandatory (your district Commissioner may have a different policy on this), the Staff meeting is a good training ground for your new Commissioner job, and your attendance at Roundtable will go a long way when you are trying to encourage your unit leaders to attend.

>> IMO, you can't do it right if it is your own unit. You'd be giving >> yourself advice. Auditing yourself. Helping yourself recharter.

Sorta like the fox guarding the henhouse :) In reality, the Commissioner is supposed to help the unit recharter on time, and needs to keep in constant touch with the responsible rechartering person. I do agree that the ties should be broken, or considerably limited.

> As a policy, my district does not allow Scouters to be UC of units they are > involved with (or were involved with). Many of the reasons (if not all) > that Paul mentioned is the reason for that policy. In some of the more > rural areas of our district, we do break this policy due to the inability to > find someone from outside that unit who can conveniently do the job. I have seen the unit/commissioner assignments vary. IMHBCO, a commissioner is most effective with a unit that the commissioner does not have a prior relationship.

You know, "a prophet is not without honor except in his own country." The commissioner's suggestions will be taken more seriously if from a "relative stranger."

> Let me add the following comments about being a Unit Commissioner...<snip>

> ...and I discovered that, as a UC, I had little direct power to change the > problems I see.

I had about a ten year hiatus from Scouting before becoming a Unit Commissioner.

I knew from the start that my job was not to run the unit, but to give a helping hand <when asked>. I have been a commissioner almost four years now, with three as a Unit Commissioner and one as an Assistant District Commissioner. I

am currently a Troop Commissioner (a Unit Commissioner who specializes in working only with Boy Scout Troops).

- > A UC can only report problems to the district but has no (direct) power
- > to really change things in the unit. <snip>

Actually, the only reporting "to the District" is through the staff meetings, where the "problem" is discussed to determine the most effective course of action. This is another case of "using your resources," your colleagues in the Commissioner Staff.

- > I am now the UC for three units. All three units are doing well (some
- > better than others). As UC, I spend one to three evenings a month
- visiting
- > my units, one evening a month calling their leaders, one evening each
- month
- > at the commissioners meeting and one evening a month at the
- roundtable.
- > That accounts for 7 to 11 hours each month spent as Unit Commissioner
- or
- > about two to three hours a week.

This is about the optimum effort needed as a Unit Commissioner. It is also the ideal workload for a Unit Commissioner - less than three units, there is too much of a tendency to "nit-pick" the assigned units, and seeing problems where none really exist. Any more than that, and the commissioner is spread too thin. Of course, this applies to "Unit Commissioners" - the "administrative commissioners," (Assistant and District Commissioners) are responsible for many more than three units, but they have help: you guessed it - the Unit Commissioners.

- > The commissioners staff is the backbone of every council. They relay
- > information from the council and the district to the units and from the
- > units to the district and the council. Without the input of the
- > commissioners staff, all decisions made by a council or district are pure
- > guess work.

The Commissioner staff also tends to overlap their jobs with functions that are more appropriate for District Committee members, because that is, in lots of cases, the only way the District and Council programs get carried out. They do most of the dog-body work.

- > Furthermore, a Unit Commissioners job is usually a thankless one. Usually a
- > Scouter knows when he is doing a good job by the faces of the Scouts he works with. He (or she) gets immediate feedback and the thrill of watching
- > the Scouts develop in front of them. As a Unit Commissioner, one does not
- > get this. If there is anything I miss about being a Scouter on the Unit level, it would have to be working with the Scouts directly.

I would encourage all unit leaders to take a hitch as a Commissioner some time in their Scouting careers. This would give them a growing appreciation of the job, that commissioners are not supernumeraries who interfere with their units' programs. Besides, observing other units may give them ideas they can use in another unit.

YiS, WWW,
Randy Spradling, P.E.
Troop Commissioner
Arrowhead District Simon Kenton Council
(and a good ole Owl, too!)
<Freemason@AOL.com>

From <@pucc.PRINCETON.EDU:owner-scouts-l@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU> Thu Jan 4 09:34:33 1996
Return-Path: <@pucc.PRINCETON.EDU:owner-scouts-l@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU>
Received: from pucc.PRINCETON.EDU (smtp@pucc.Princeton.EDU [128.112.129.99]) by cap1.CapAccess.org (8.6.12/8.6.10) with SMTP id JAA00799; Thu, 4 Jan 1996 09:34:33 -0500
Received: from PUCC.PRINCETON.EDU by pucc.PRINCETON.EDU (IBM VM SMTP V2R2)
with BSMTP id 7082; Thu, 04 Jan 96 09:32:48 EST

Received: from TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU (NJE origin MAILER@TCUBVM) by PUCCL.PRINCETON.EDU (LMail V1.2a/1.8a) with BSMTP id 1685; Thu, 4 Jan 1996 09:32:48 -0500

Received: from TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU (NJE origin LISTSERV@TCUBVM) by TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU (LMail V1.2a/1.8a) with BSMTP id 0369; Thu, 4 Jan 1996 08:02:20 -0600

Received: from TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU by TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU (LISTSERV release 1.8b)

with NJE id 9062 for SCOUTS-L@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU; Thu, 4 Jan 1996

08:01:38 -0600

Received: from TCUBVM (NJE origin SMTP@TCUBVM) by TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU (LMail

V1.2a/1.8a) with BSMTP id 9061; Wed, 3 Jan 1996 22:29:10 -0600

Received: from emout06.mail.aol.com by tcubvm.is.tcu.edu (IBM VM SMTP V2R2)

with TCP; Wed, 03 Jan 96 22:29:05 CST

Received: by emout06.mail.aol.com (8.6.12/8.6.12) id XAA04980 for SCOUTS-L@tcubvm.is.tcu.edu; Wed, 3 Jan 1996 23:29:12 -0500

Message-ID: <960103231920_105965514@emout06.mail.aol.com>

Date: Wed, 3 Jan 1996 23:29:12 -0500

**Reply-To: SCOUTS-L - Youth Groups Discussion List
<SCOUTS-L@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU>**

**Sender: SCOUTS-L - Youth Groups Discussion List
<SCOUTS-L@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU>**

From: "James A. Sheckels" <JASHECKELS@AOL.COM>

Subject: Re: Unit Commissioners

To: Multiple recipients of list SCOUTS-L <SCOUTS-L@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU>

Status: RO

X-Status:

In Randy Spralding's post he mentions the administrative commissioners as

District and Assistant District Commissioners. Actually, the Administrative Commissioners are Assistant Council and Assistant District Commissioners, and

Roundtable staff. The District Commissioner is a PRIMARY "line" leader (as is the Council Commissioner and Unit Commissioner). You can keep them straight by remembering the administrative positions have a gold (or yellow)

wreath, the primary or line Commissioners have a silver wreath. The wreath

of SERVICE, a Commissioner's main function - SERVICE (note that a District

Exec also wears a silver wreath - a SERVICE wreath!).

A commissioner is not there mainly to help the unit recharter on time. The job is to administer the ANNUAL SERVICE PLN, which is a year round full-time plan, not the annual re-charter process. This plan includes the Roundtables/Huddles, unit visitation, encouraging training attendance, attending training, etc, etc.

IMO, a Commissioner (ANY Commissioner) who does not attend Roundtable/Huddle cannot effectively perform the duties of the job. And those who are Council/Assistant Council Commissioners, District Commissioners, and CS/BS RT or Huddle Commissioners should go to the monthly Council Conference of Commissioners to do their job.

If you are a Commissioner and you want to wear the wreath, give the SERVICE.

You want to wear the Arrowhead, give EXCELLENCE to your committment (it's in the name!).

Oops, preaching again (it is free still ;-)). Let me qualify: Adult leader since 75, that's 20 years (I know, it is all the fingers and toes I have, don't know what to do now). Of that I have spent 3 as a Unit Commissioner, 4 as a District Commissioner, 2 as an Assistant Council Commissioner, 3 as Assistant District Commissioner, and 2 on Roundtable (yep, 14 years, unless I missed a toe). Other 5 were 2.5 as Scoutmaster, 2 as Asst SM, and odd months as District or Unit Committee member. And one National Jambo on sub-camp Commissioner SERVICE staff. I also got a Doctorate of Commissioner Sciences and Masters of Roundtable Sciences, several completions of Arrowheads, and two Distinguished Commissioner District and Asst Council). So I know just a little about Commissioner SERVICE, but I'm still having fun learning!

As an adult not working directly with youth, there is no better or more

rewarding job than that of a Commissioner. Believe it! (Well, maybe Training Team comes close).

The best advice I could give any Commissioner: 1. If you don't know, say you don't know. Then go find out the RIGHT answer and get back to the unit ASAP.

Never, ever, NEVER try to bull your way through. You will not be welcome back. Bank on it. 2. ALWAYS bring something for the unit - info, a flyer, new badge requirements, but not the proverbial "clipboard". 3. Be a friend,

we need of those we can get.

YIS Jim Sheckels I used to be a Bobwhite....

From <@pucc.PRINCETON.EDU:owner-scouts-l@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU> Thu Jan 4 10:25:14 1996

Return-Path: <@pucc.PRINCETON.EDU:owner-scouts-l@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU>

Received: from pucc.PRINCETON.EDU (smtpc@pucc.Princeton.EDU [128.112.129.99]) by cap1.CapAccess.org (8.6.12/8.6.10) with SMTP id KAA19800; Thu, 4 Jan 1996 10:25:14 -0500

Received: from PUCC.PRINCETON.EDU by pucc.PRINCETON.EDU (IBM VM SMTP V2R2)

with BSMTP id 4089; Thu, 04 Jan 96 10:22:46 EST

Received: from TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU (NJE origin MAILER@TCUBVM) by PUCC.PRINCETON.EDU (LMail V1.2a/1.8a) with BSMTP id 4288; Thu, 4 Jan 1996 10:20:47 -0500

Received: from TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU (NJE origin LISTSERV@TCUBVM) by TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU (LMail V1.2a/1.8a) with BSMTP id 1280; Thu, 4 Jan 1996 08:59:19 -0600

Received: from TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU by TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU (LISTSERV release 1.8b)

with NJE id 1233 for SCOUTS-L@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU; Thu, 4 Jan 1996

08:58:43 -0600

Received: from TCUBVM (NJE origin SMTP@TCUBVM) by TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU (LMail

V1.2a/1.8a) with BSMTP id 1232; Thu, 4 Jan 1996 08:58:18 -0600

Received: from mailhub.iastate.edu by tcubvm.is.tcu.edu (IBM VM SMTP V2R2) with

TCP; Thu, 04 Jan 96 08:58:16 CST

Received: from cvm01.vm.iastate.edu (cvm01.vm.iastate.edu [129.186.50.198]) by

mailhub.iastate.edu (8.6.9/8.6.9) with SMTP id IAA02729 for
<SCOUTS-L@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU>; Thu, 4 Jan 1996 08:58:35 -0600
Received: from CVM01/MAILQUEUE by cvm01.vm.iastate.edu (Mercury
1.12); Thu, 4
Jan 96 9:00:00 CST
Received: from MAILQUEUE by CVM01 (Mercury 1.12); Thu, 4 Jan 96
8:59:32 CST
Priority: normal
X-mailer: Pegasus Mail for Windows (v2.0-WB3)
Message-ID: <12058E438E3@cvm01.vm.iastate.edu>
Date: Thu, 4 Jan 1996 08:59:25 CST
Reply-To: SCOUTS-L - Youth Groups Discussion List
<SCOUTS-L@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU>
Sender: SCOUTS-L - Youth Groups Discussion List
<SCOUTS-L@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU>
From: Greg Helle <GAHELLE@CVM01.VM.IASTATE.EDU>
Subject: Re: Unit Commissioners
To: Multiple recipients of list SCOUTS-L <SCOUTS-L@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU>
Status: RO
X-Status:

Although I can agree in theory that a unit commissioner should break ties with the unit, I strongly suggest that a unit commissioner tied with the troop is better than no commissioner.

I am a unit commissioner for my troop...also an ASM and past SM. Our prior commissioner did not attend council or district functions and would only attend troop activities or committee meetings when forced to. This was not support or service to the troop. I can at least make sure that the troop is aware of activities, rule changes, and advise them on policy.

This would be different if there were more scouters who wanted to be commissioners. Our district has not been able to offer every unit a commissioner for years. Therefore, although the theory is good, in practice a commissioner tied to the troop is much better than no commissioner.

YIS
Greg Helle
ASM, UC, District Camping Chair
I used to be a buffalo.....

Date: Thu, 4 Jan 1996 09:11:47 MST
From: Carol Breuer <CBreuer@VINES.COLOSTATE.EDU>
Subject: Commissioner's Job

I've been reading the posts on what a commissioner's job includes, and would like to add my 2 cents.

One thing that I have not seen mentioned is that a unit commissioner's unit visit can, and I feel that it should, include visiting the unit's committee meetings. As a commissioner I feel I learn more about how the unit is working and what problems they face by sitting in on their committee meeting.

It can't take the place of visiting pack or troop meetings. Those are important for seeing how the program serves the boys, but I find the committee meetings are a good place to serve as a resource when questions come up, and give opportunities to get to know the adult leaders better, and not just the ones who are at the troop meetings. Also, as an ADC now supervizing several unit commissioners, I encourage them to periodically visit a committee meeting, and those who do find it very informative.

I thoroughly enjoy my role as a commissioner. The job is what you make it.

I find plenty of opportunities to get acquainted with the adults and youth in

my units, and I find I enjoy spending the time it takes to do the unit visits. I serve as unit commissioner to two troops, and have made it know that I enjoy being included on campouts. I have camped with both troops and

find that is another good way to see how the program is being run, as well as

having the fun myself of enjoying the outing. In commissioner training we try to emphasize that a commissioner is to be a friend to their units, as well as advisor and observer, and doctor when needed. It helps when problem

situations arise (and even good units have problems), if the leaders see you

as a friend they can turn to for help, and can feel that you are concerned with helping them find a solution.

Sorry, . . . didn't mean to get on a soapbox, but I feel a good commissioner

can really make a difference in this program.

YiS,
Carol Breuer, Fort Collins, CO
Asst. District Commissioner
. . . I used to be an eagle, NC-155

Date: Sun, 9 Jun 1996 00:01:41 -0400 (EDT)
From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@CapAccess.org>
To: SCOUTS-L - Youth Groups Discussion List <SCOUTS-L@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU>
cc: Multiple recipients of list SCOUTS-L <SCOUTS-L@TCUBVM.IS.TCU.EDU>
Subject: Re: Commissioner's College

This posting is intended to offer some suggestions regarding confusing the College of Commissioner Science with an academic institution and to outline the "degree" requirements set by BSA.

The concerns raised about confusing the College of Commissioner Science with an academic institution are not without merit. If a Scouter were to list a degree in such a manner as to suggest an academic credential on an employment application, etc., he/she might be suspected of misrepresenting his/her credentials or in the case of Switzerland of having committed an outright fraud. The key here is to communicate the whole story. On most job applications or in resumes a short statement to indicate that you have had specialized Scouting related training should suffice. For example you could state; "BSA offers specialized training in volunteer leadership at an annual training conference called the College of Commissioner Science. I attended this conference and was recognized with a non-academic Bachelor of Commissioner Science degree (honorary recognition) in 1996." This should allow you an excellent entry to discussion of leadership and management skills you have learned outside of the job environment and perhaps give you an advantage in the process.

BSA's Continuing Education for Commissioners, No. 33165 (1995) at page 19 sets forth SUGGESTED degree requirements as follows (many Councils including ours have altered these requirements slightly to adapt to local or unique circumstances; e.g. six instead of seven courses for a degree):

Bachelor of Commissioner Science Degree (BCS)

Prerequisites

Current registration as a commissioner, including those recently recruited.

Completion of commissioner orientation (Commissioner Fieldbook, pages 3-6)

Completion of commissioner basic training

Course Requirements

Completion of seven courses of instruction, at least five of the courses at the bachelor's program level

Performance

Approval of district commissioner

Approval of district executive

Master of Commissioner Science Degree (MCS)

Prerequisites

Completion of bachelor's degree or have been awarded the Commissioner's Key

Earned the Arrowhead Honor

Current registration as a commissioner

Course Requirements

Completion of seven additional courses of instruction (total of fourteen), at least seven of the courses at the master's program level

Performance

Approval of district commissioner

Approval of district executive

Doctor of Commissioner Science Degree (DCS)

Prerequisites

Completion of master's degree

Have been awarded the Commissioner's Key

Current registration as a commissioner

Course Requirements

Completion of ten additional courses of instruction (total of twenty-four), at least five of the courses at the doctor's program level

Thesis or Research Project

Completion of a thesis or research project on any topic of value to Scouting in the local council.

The topic and final paper must be approved by the dean of the doctor's program and the staff advisor

Performance

Serve on the College of Commissioner Science faculty (instructor or support staff) for at least one year

Recruit at least three new commissioners

Approval of district commissioner

Approval of district executive

Speaking Only for Myself in the Scouting Spirit, Michael F. Bowman a/k/a Professor Beaver (WB), ASTA #2566, OA Vigil Honor '71, Eagle Scout '67, Serving as Deputy District Commissioner for Training, G.W.Dist., Nat. Capital Area Council, BSA - mfbowman@capaccess.org