

THE COMMISSIONERS' ROLE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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Forward

Author's Note: At the time of this writing, the English language is undergoing change as contemporary society searches for conventions that honor all people. For most readers, the forms "...as *the player* begins *his or her* activity..." "...as *the player* begins *her* activity..." and "... as *the player* begins *their* activity..." do not yet enter the mind as transparently as the more common "... as *the player* begins *his* activity..." In the body text of *Mystique Poetica*, I have, therefore, consciously used the masculine form for all pronouns solely in the interest of writing text that, I hope, flows most smoothly for most readers. I trust that all female readers (and all male readers who are sensitive to issues of inclusion) will understand this decision.

— JBright-Fey

Introduction

The world has changed a lot. Or has it? Scouting prides itself on “traditional values”, and yet we find ourselves at a technological threshold that we may no longer ignore. It is all around us, whether we like it or not. Satellite TV, computers, home theater, internet, download, up-load. With advances in technology also come advances in communication. No longer is it necessary to go to the library to get information - just log on to the internet. No longer do you have to compose a letter or go visit - just send an email.

With all of this wonderful body of knowledge, we sometimes might wonder if there is still a need for face-to-face communication.

This thesis attempts to address the question “What is THE COMMISSIONERS’ ROLE IN THE 21ST CENTURY”? Is there any role left for the commissioner? Are email and the internet sufficient enough to quench the thirst for knowledge in the scouting community? Do we still need any personal interaction at all?

What the literature says Commissioners should be doing

The following are excerpted from the Commissioner Fieldbook for Unit Service and the Commissioner Administration of Unit Service.

The comments in italics are observations by the author.

Unit Commissioner:

1. Help each unit earn the Quality Unit Award.
Is it possible to achieve this goal without personal contact? Maybe, but it seems to be much easier and much more successful with the presence of the Commissioner at meetings and functions
2. Use the annual commissioner service plan, with its scheduled opportunities for commissioner contact with units.
“Contact” may be the key word here. If all units served, knew the commissioner service plan, maybe it could be impersonal contact, but then if they knew that, why would the commissioner even be necessary?
3. Know each phase of the Scouting program and be able to describe what each is and how each works. Review Scouting program literature.
No one knows everything about anything. Our hope here is that commissioners will be familiar with phase of the Scouting program and will continue to research information at their own pace to make themselves more valuable resources.
4. Visit unit meetings
 - a. Observe the unit in action and determine the degree to which the descriptions in the literature are being followed.
Pretty tough to “observe” if not physically present
 - b. Privately use the commissioner worksheet.
Can be filled out anytime after the meeting. Should never be brought out or used during the meeting - too intimidating
 - c. If called upon, participate or help in some of the regular activities of the unit.
Pretty tough to “participate” if not physically present
5. Visit regularly with the unit leader
 - a. Listen to what the unit leader has to say.
Maybe can be accomplished on the phone, but there’s nothing like that personal touch. Phone or other (email, etc.) would be better than not communicating because you can’t get together

- b. Offer encouragement and support.
Maybe remotely
 - c. Using the literature, help the leader see new opportunities for improvement.
Maybe remotely, but it would be nice to be able to show the literature to the leader
 - d. Maintain the best possible relationship with unit leadership.
Doesn't mean that you have to be big drinking buddies, but an occasional one-on-one contact helps assure the leader that you are available and that you care
 - e. Help the leader with forms and applications.
This seems to be one of the biggest headaches of leaders. If there is a strong unit committee, maybe the secretary can handle this job. Forms could be mailed to transmitted electronically
 - f. Encourage unit participation in district and council program events.
One good way to accomplish this is to volunteer oneself first, and then ask others in the unit. "Looking them in the eye" seems to be more productive than phone or other remote contact
6. Work to assure effective and active unit committees.
- a. Visit with the unit committee periodically.
Nice to attend committee meetings when possible
 - b. Observe the committee in action.
Must be physically present to accomplish this. A great way to observe is to make oneself an active member of the committee
 - c. Using the literature, offer suggestions for improvement.
A very sensitive subject. An active committee member may be resentful of any criticism, after all, isn't it the committee member who is making the unit go, while the commissioner is just an occasional visitor?
 - d. Work with the committee to solve problems and improve unit operation.
As the commissioner becomes known in the unit, leaders and committee members will naturally begin to rely on his expertise and experience. Be careful to not push yourself on others when it might cause friction
7. Keep in touch with the chartered organizations of the units you serve.
- a. Meet and orient the chartered organization representative.
Realize that this may be a different person from time to time. Personal contact seems to be best here

- b. Meet the head of the chartered organization and explain your role as helper of units.
Again, personal contact seems to be best here. People, especially heads of organizations like to meet you face-to-face so that they can observe your demeanor.
 - c. Help develop a good relationship between unit leaders and chartered organizations.
May be accomplished remotely, but there is some assurance in bringing them together
 - d. In close cooperation with the district executive, give the leaders of the organization a brief progress report and compliment them for using scouting.
This may be an annual report, or as requested by the chartered organization. Personal contact seems to be best here
8. Know the neighborhood in which your units are located.
- a. Help graduating members of one program join the next level of scouting.
If a commissioner is participating in unit activities, he will have more opportunities to share activities and experience of the other units
 - b. Identify potential sources for new youth members.
Siblings, friends, observers are all potential sources for new youth members. Wouldn't a commissioner have to be present to see these opportunities?
 - c. Cultivate men and women of good moral character who might become Scouting leaders.
Being around people might afford a better opportunity to observe moral character. Although others can share some information, it might be difficult to draw your own conclusion about a person without observing that person yourself.
 - d. Know chartered organizations and prospective ones.
An ongoing task for some commissioners. Again, organizations like the personal touch, but referrals and initial contact can certainly be handled remotely.
 - e. Learn about resources and characteristics of the neighborhood, which may affect a unit.
Is it a rich area? A poor one? Do they embrace Scouting? Is Scouting fighting to survive there? Consider what the neighborhood can give to the Scouting movement. This knowledge can certainly be gained without traveling to a location

9. Know the district and council.
 - a. Identify resources that can help the unit.
Scouters typically are enthusiastic about helping Scouting anywhere. Some good opportunities to “network” with other scouters are roundtables and council events. Don’t be afraid to ask. They want to help your program if they can
 - b. Know scheduled events that will help the unit.
Scouts love camping. There are normally both district and council camping opportunities. Popcorn is a good fund-raiser. Training is normally conducted at the district or council level, or both. A commissioner does not necessarily need to attend event scheduling in person, but it is usually an interesting activity and the commissioner’s input is almost always appreciated
 - c. Work closely with the professional staff.
Remote communication works okay here. Personal contact is nice for key-three meetings
 - d. Use members of district operating committees to help meet specialized needs of your units.
Remote communication works fine here, if you are familiar with the district operating committee members. However, it is always advantageous to get to know someone utilizing personal contact
10. Set a good example.
 - a. Adopt an attitude of helpfulness.
Can an attitude be portrayed without showing up in person? Maybe. May depend on the individual.
 - b. Keep promises.
Keep them remotely, keep them in person, but keep them! This is so important, not just for commissioners, but for everyone in the world. Others will judge us by the promises we keep, or don’t keep.
 - c. Be concerned about proper uniforming.
How can a commissioner comment on others’ uniforms unless he is in full uniform with everything in its place? How can a commissioner be in uniform unless he is present?
 - d. Be diplomatic.
If you ever lose the respect or confidence of others, it is desperately difficult to regain it. It’s sometimes is very difficult to avoid making people mad. Just remember that they are already mad about something. That’s why a commissioner is being called upon to be the diplomat. The last

thing a commissioner wants to do is to make anything worse. Diplomacy is best handled in person

- e. Be a model of Scouting ideals.
Models could be presented remotely or in person.

- 11. Continue to grow as a commissioner through training, experience, and consultation with others in the district.
Consultation might be accomplished remotely. Experience could be a combination of personal and remote contact. Training is probably going to have to be in person, since most commissioner training is only offered at the council level

- 12. Involve unit personnel in Cub Scout roundtables, Boy Scout roundtables, Varsity Scout huddles, and/or Explorer Officers' association meetings.
Generally achieved in person

- 13. Make certain that proper techniques are used to select and recruit unit leaders.
Depending on the expertise of the people selecting and recruiting the leaders, this may be done remotely

- 14. Facilitate the on-time annual charter renewal of all assigned units.
 - a. Help the unit conduct a membership inventory of youth and adults.
Although the inventory could be conducted remotely through information gathered from other leaders, or without the commissioner at all, it might be easier to ascertain the inventory of active members by observing participation in person

 - b. Help the unit committee chairman conduct the charter renewal meeting.
Meetings are normally attended in person

 - c. See that a completed charter renewal application is returned to the council service center
Certainly can be handled by mail.

 - d. Present the new charter at an appropriate meeting of the chartered organization
Definitely in person; only in person

- 15. See that the unit leadership participates in adequate training.
Ultra important. A fantastic opportunity to be exposed to the methods of the type of unit that they lead, as well as the aims and methods; rules and regulations of the Scouting program in general

Roundtable Commissioner:

1. Recruit and train a staff qualified to put on quality roundtables/huddles for unit personnel.
Maybe this can be done remotely, depending on how well he knows the recruits. Again, the personal touch can be very effective here.
2. Plan monthly roundtable/huddle programs.
May be accomplished remotely if the Roundtable Commissioner has good contact and rapport with Roundtable staff
3. Make all arrangements for roundtables/huddles including meeting places, equipment, and supplies.
May be accomplished remotely if the Roundtable Commissioner has good contact and rapport with the meeting place controller
4. Conduct regular critiques to determine how roundtables/huddles can be improved.
Although it is interesting to hear ideas in a group setting, some might be reluctant to divulge their true feelings in a group. Remote communication may be more appropriate for these leaders

Council Commissioner:

1. Supervise the activities of the commissioner staff and preside at regular meetings of district commissioners.

Certainly the supervision part can be accomplished remotely, but to “preside” seems to imply a physical togetherness

2. Lead efforts to recruit a quality commissioner staff to provide continuing and effective commissioner service for each unit (a ratio of one commissioner for every three units and one assistant district commissioner for every five unit commissioners). Join with the Scout executive to hold district commissioners and district executives accountable for adequate recruiting.

A combination of personal and remote contact is probably best in this case, but if the Council Commissioner promotes the concept to the District Commissioners should it not be the responsibility of the District Commissioners and the Assistant District Commissioners to conduct the actual recruiting?

3. Be sure that districts provide opportunities for immediate commissioner orientation, frequent basic training, and monthly learning experiences for all commissioners.

Remote work at its finest

4. Assist district nominating committees in selecting district commissioners as needed. Serve on a district nominating committee in those districts where the council president believes you could help the district replace its district commissioner.

Assisting nominating committees sounds a lot like “presiding”, probably best done in person

5. Conduct an annual council commissioner conference. Be sure that the conference includes the best in training sessions, fellowship, inspiration, and information on the latest in Scouting. Do everything possible to make it easy for everyone to attend, e.g. attractive setting and close to home.

A very important event, conducted in person. How to get it “close to home” may be the topic for another whole thesis.

6. Maintain the standards of the Boy Scouts of America. Uphold national policies, promote good uniforming, and lead efforts to hold regular roundtable programs in the districts.

What is the best way to maintain standards? You guessed it! Live them yourself. What is the best way to promote good uniforming? Hmmm. You got it right again!

“Leading efforts” should be able to be accomplished remotely

7. Be concerned with proper recognition of unit leaders. Maintain their morale, periodically reporting unit conditions to the executive board.

Proper recognition is important, however, the Council Commissioner is rarely in contact with leaders at that level. Again, should it not be the responsibility of the District Commissioners and the Assistant District Commissioners to monitor leader recognition?

8. Help the district commissioners maintain a good working relationship with related district executives.

Much of what the Council Commissioner does is carried out at such a high level that it must be left to his discretion as to how the contact is made. He may feel more at ease communication in person or by remote means.

9. Maintain procedures to assure maximum on-time unit charter renewal by district commissioner staffs.

See #8.

10. Work with the council president to secure the help of communities in meeting unit needs.

See #8.

11. Develop a no-lapse/no-drop commitment in the council and each of its districts. Be sure each district has a commitment and a strategy to provide prompt, intensive, and persistent care when major problems occur that could threaten the life of a unit.

See #8.

Assistant Council Commissioner:

1. A “stand-in.” Like the vice president of an organization, an assistant council commissioner can be appointed by the council commissioner to act as a substitute when he or she is temporarily unable to serve (out of town, ill. etc.).

The will “stand-in” responsibility requires the Assistant Council Commissioner to act in the same way that the Council Commissioner would in the given situation

2. A “copilot.” A good assistant does more than wait for emergency action. An assistant should share the weight of leadership as determined by the council commissioner.

There are many ways that the assistant can help: by handling topics at the council commissioners cabinet meetings, or helping to guide a new district commissioner.

Again, the situation would dictate whether the matter could be handled personally or remotely

3. On “special assignment.” The council commissioner might ask assistants to do special ongoing assignments. This is the most popular role of the assistant. Five are listed in order of popularity.

- Training. The assistant council commissioner for training coordinates commissioner training in the council; sees that basic training is available somewhere in the council during all parts of the year; trains district trainers; and sees that the concept of “continuing education for commissioners” really works.

Coordinating can certainly be handled remotely; the training itself is normally carried out in person

- Geographic service area. Councils with eight or more districts often have assistants who provide special support as needed for clusters of districts in various parts of the council. The assistants are careful to give district commissioners their rightful direct responsibility for operation in their districts. Council assistants make themselves available for guidance and help where needed.

Probably a combination of personal and remote contact

- Roundtables. Many councils have assistants to help in training district roundtable personnel by bringing them together twice a year to exchange ideas, share new ways of promoting attendance, creating active program features, and handling good roundtable logistics.

“Bringing them together” would certainly imply personal contact

- Program. Some councils have program assistants for Cub Scouting, Boy Scouting, Venturing, and Exploring.

Probably a combination of personal and remote contact

- Commissioner conference. Some councils have assistants who lead the team that runs the annual council commissioner conference (college or non-college type of conference).

“Conference” would certainly imply personal contact

District Commissioner:

1. Identify and recruit enough of the right people as commissioners so that all Scouting units in the district receive regular, helpful service.
Personal contact seems to be best here. Some things about people can be more readily determined in person than they can be determined on the phone or computer
2. Provide opportunities for immediate commissioner orientation, frequent basic training, and monthly learning experiences for all commissioners.
*“Providing opportunities” may be handled remotely if it is a matter of “finding someone”.
If it involves doing them yourself, they are probably better in person*
3. Supervise and motivate unit commissioners to visit each unit regularly, identify unit needs, and make plans to meet unit needs.
Probably a combination of personal and remote contact
4. Administer the annual commissioner service plan, which gives specific purposes for commissioner contact with units at designated times of the year.
Nice to come together on this one, but like most situations, remote contact is better than no contact
5. Oversee the unit charter renewal plan so that each unit reregisters on time and with optimum membership.
“Oversee” would seem to imply that others would be actually carrying it out, therefore, this responsibility should be able to be accomplished remotely
6. Guide roundtable commissioners to ensure that monthly roundtables are well-attended, and provide practical and exciting unit program ideas.
“Guiding” is another job that can be accomplished remotely
7. Plan and preside at monthly meetings of the district commissioner staff.
“Meetings” are normally conducted in person
8. Work with the district chairman and district executive to stimulate and coordinate the work of the district.
Could be a combination of personal and remote contact, at the District Commissioner’s discretion
9. Help meet district goals.
Type of contact should be based on what is necessary to achieve this objective. If the goal is a camporee, the District Commissioner would probably want to attend in person, if it is find someone to plan a banquet, it could be by mail, telephone, fax, etc.
10. Represent the district as a member of the council commissioner cabinet.

If “represent” is a meeting, that would normally be conducted in person. If “represent” is a duty assigned by the council commissioner, the type of contact should be determined at the discretion of the council commissioner or the district commissioner

11. Support local and national Scouting policy, procedures, and practices.
“Support” could be set example, discuss, etc. Type of contact should be determined by the need

12. Attend district committee meetings to report on conditions of units and to secure specialized help for units.
“Meetings” are normally conducted in person

Assistant District Commissioner:

- Help recruit the right people

Depending on the expertise of the people selecting and recruiting the leaders, this may be done remotely

- Provide clear instructions and specific ideas for their staff

If a good communicator, the Assistant District Commissioner could bring this about by telephone, email, and etc. Often, instructions are better understood and remembered in writing

- Listen to what people say and feel

“What people say” can usually be determined be remote means; “what they feel” may be a different matter

- Never play favorites

Whoa! We all (should) understand this one. Personal or remote

- Coach unit commissioners through real unit problem-solving situations

Type of contact should be based on what is necessary to achieve this objective

- Treat all Scouters with courtesy and dignity

Both types of contact

- Praise each commissioner often for specific achievements

Best in person, but “remote praise is better than no praise”

- Do not try to take credit for their staff but always are ready to support or help them to be successful

Personal or remote, put others first!

What the leaders say Commissioners should be doing

A survey form (see appendix) was presented to several leaders to get a sampling of how leaders feel about the role of Commissioners. This section discusses the results of the survey as well as comments made on the forms.

When a leader selected multiple answers for the same question (such as Boy Scout leader and Cub Leader) the first answer was used.

No Explorer or Venture Leaders responded.

58.8% of respondents were Boy Scout leaders

27.1% of respondents were Commissioners

2.4% of respondents were Cub Leaders

11.8% of respondents were "Other" Leaders

Are you familiar with the role of Commissioner?

68% of Boy Scout leaders said, "Yes"

26% of Boy Scout leaders said "No"

6% of Boy Scout leaders said they were "Not Sure"

90% of Commissioners said, "Yes"

10% of said Commissioners they were "Not Sure"

100% of Cub Leaders said, "Yes"

70% of "Other" Leaders said "Yes"

30% of "Other" Leaders said "No"

Do you think that Commissioners should:

2% of Boy Scout leaders picked "Communicate with units by alternate means, such as email"

52% of Boy Scout leaders picked "Continue to visit their units in person"

46% of Boy Scout leaders picked "Some visits, some alternate communication"

39.1% of Commissioners picked "Continue to visit their units in person"

60.9% of Commissioners picked "Some visits, some alternate communication"

50% of Cub Scout leaders picked "Continue to visit their units in person"

50% of Cub Scout leaders picked "Some visits, some alternate communication"

10% of "Other" leaders picked "Continue to visit their units in person"

20% of "Other" leaders picked "Don't Know"

70% of Cub Scout leaders picked "Some visits, some alternate communication"

Is the Quality Unit Award important to your unit(s)?

- 64% of Boy Scout leaders chose "Yes"
- 34% of Boy Scout leaders chose "Somewhat"
- 2% of Boy Scout leaders chose "No"
- 69.6% of Commissioners chose "Yes"
- 21.7% of Commissioners chose "Somewhat"
- 8.7% of Commissioners chose "Important to some"
- 50% of Cub Scout leaders chose "Yes"
- 50% of Cub Scout leaders chose "Somewhat"
- 77.8% of "Other" leaders chose "Yes"
- 11.1% of "Other" leaders chose "Somewhat"
- 11.1% of "Other" leaders chose "Important to some"

Do you think that unit committees still need help with plans, finances, rechartering, unit leadership, recruiting, etc?

- 69.2% of Boy Scout leaders chose "Yes"
- 46.2% of Boy Scout leaders chose "Sometimes"
- 5.1% of Boy Scout leaders chose "Never"
- 5.1% of Boy Scout leaders chose "Don't Know"
- 73.9% of Commissioners chose "Yes"
- 21.7% of Commissioners chose "Sometimes"
- 4.3% of Commissioners chose "Never"
- 50% of Cub Scout leaders chose "Yes"
- 50% of Cub Scout leaders chose "Sometimes"
- 66.7% of "Other" leaders chose "Yes"
- 11.1% of "Other" leaders chose "Never"
- 22.2% of "Other" leaders chose "Don't Know"

Should Commissioners have their own monthly meeting, or can they communicate effectively without being physically in the same room?

- 20.4% of Boy Scout leaders thought that they "Don't Know"
- 38.5% of Boy Scout leaders thought "Monthly"
- 61.5% of Boy Scout leaders thought "Occasionally"
- 36.4% of Commissioners thought "Monthly"
- 33.3% of Commissioners thought "Occasionally"
- 100% of Cub Scout leaders thought "Monthly"
- 20% of "Other" leaders thought that they "Don't Know"
- 30% of "Other" leaders thought "Monthly"
- 50% of "Other" leaders thought "Occasionally"

How important is advanced/continuing Commissioner training?

86.7% of Boy Scout leaders felt that it was "Very important"

13.3% of Boy Scout leaders felt that "Basic training is enough"

100% of Commissioners felt that it was "Very important"

100% of Cub Scout leaders felt that it was "Very important"

66.7% of "Other" leaders felt that it was "Very important"

33.3% of "Other" leaders felt that "Basic training is enough"

No one replied, "don't need training"

Are Commissioner Awards important?

100% of Boy Scout leaders selected "Yes"

95.5% of Commissioners selected "Yes"

4.5% of Commissioners selected "No"

100% of Cub Scout leaders selected "Yes"

100% of "Other" leaders selected "Yes"

Are roundtables useful?

95.5% of Boy Scout leaders selected "Yes"

2.2% of Boy Scout leaders selected "No"

1.1% of Boy Scout leaders selected "Don't Know"

100% of Commissioners selected "Yes"

100% of Cub Scout leaders selected "Yes"

100% of "Other" leaders selected "Yes"

In general, the comments from the surveys were very positive (see Appendix C). A recurring suggestion, not only in the Commissioner service, but also in most leadership levels, is the need for better communication, in the sense of personal contact and in record keeping.

Conclusion

Even though world has changed, maybe the need for interpersonal contact, at least among the Scouting community, has not.

The literature seems to imply in many of the Commissioner duties that there is a desire for leaders to communicate in person. Activities such as charter presentations would be meaningless if the “presenter” were not “present”.

Still, technology has given us some powerful tools to enhance our communication skills. That does not mean that the tools must or should replace the face-to-face contact. Perhaps it means that communication in person may become a new “traditional value”, one that was understood before all of this technology swept down upon us. Email may be perfectly okay for those who we know well and are comfortable sending a quick note, where a new leader might be more comfortable with discussion at a roundtable or after a unit meeting.

The leader surveys confirm that the leaders want and expect Commissioners who are trained, communicate in person at least some of the time, help out with the unit administrative activities, and have their own meetings. The surveys also showed that leaders like the quality unit award and the Commissioner awards. The requirements for these awards are not listed in this document and how the Commissioner’s presence affects these awards may be the topic for yet another whole thesis.

So how do we handle the balance of local vs. remote conversations? Maybe if we use technology to enhance communication skills, we can make Scouting a more influential and effective program than ever before. Or maybe we are destined for future life in the “Matrix”, where no one ever actually sees any other living being. Let’s hope not; at least not within the Scouting program.

Appendix A

Commissioner Service in the 21st Century

As we enter the new century, we are faced with some new challenges, as well as some very exciting opportunities. We are attempting to identify some of those challenges and opportunities. Please take a few minutes to fill out this questionnaire. Please return this form to: Robert A. Johnson

505 CR 181
Jemison, AL 35085

Thanks!

Your position in Scouting: Commissioner Cub Leader Boy Scout Leader
 Explorer Leader Venture Crew Leader Other _____

Are you familiar with the role of Commissioner? Yes No Not Sure

Do you think that Commissioners should: Continue to visit their units in person
 Communicate with units by alternate means, such as email
 Some visits, some alternate communication
 Don't know

Is the Quality Unit Award important to your unit(s)?
 Yes, very important Somewhat important Not important Important to some

Do you think that unit committees still need help with plans, finances, rechartering, unit leadership, recruiting, etc? Yes Sometimes Never Don't know

Should Commissioners have their own monthly meeting, or can they communicate effectively without being physically in the same room?
 Need to meet monthly Meet occasionally Don't need to meet Don't know

How important is advanced/continuing Commissioner training?
 Very important Basic training is enough Don't need training

Are Commissioner Awards important? Yes No Why? _____

Are roundtables useful? Yes No Don't know

Comments about role of Commissioner:

Appendix B Survey Results

Your position in Scouting:

Position	Number
Boy Scout Leader	50
Commissioner	23
Cub Leader	2
Other	10

No venture leaders replied

Are you familiar with the role of Commissioner?

Position	Response	Number
Boy Scout Leader	Yes	34
Boy Scout Leader	No	13
Boy Scout Leader	Not Sure	3
Commissioner	Yes	19
Commissioner	Not Sure	2
Cub Leader	Yes	2
Other	Yes	7
Other	No	3

Do you think that Commissioners should:

Position	Response	Number
Boy Scout Leader	Communicate with units by alternate means, such as email	1
Boy Scout Leader	Continue to visit their units in person	26
Boy Scout Leader	Some visits, some alternate communication	23
Commissioner	Continue to visit their units in person	9
Commissioner	Some visits, some alternate communication	14
Cub Leader	Continue to visit their units in person	1
Cub Leader	Some visits, some alternate communication	1
Other	Continue to visit their units in person	1
Other	Don't Know	2
Other	Some visits, some alternate communication	7

Is the Quality Unit Award important to your unit(s)?

Position	Response	Number
Boy Scout Leader	Yes	32
Boy Scout Leader	Somewhat	17
Boy Scout Leader	No	1
Commissioner	Yes	16
Commissioner	Somewhat	5
Commissioner	Important to some	2
Cub Leader	Yes	1
Cub Leader	Somewhat	1
Other	Yes	7
Other	Somewhat	1
Other	Important to some	1

Do you think that unit committees still need help with plans, finances, rechartering, unit leadership, recruiting, etc?

Position	Response	Number
Boy Scout Leader	Yes	27
Boy Scout Leader	Sometimes	18
Boy Scout Leader	Never	2
Boy Scout Leader	Don't Know	2
Commissioner	Yes	17
Commissioner	Sometimes	5
Commissioner	Never	1
Cub Leader	Yes	1
Cub Leader	Sometimes	1
Other	Yes	6
Other	Never	1
Other	Don't Know	2

Should Commissioners have their own monthly meeting, or can they communicate effectively without being physically in the same room?

Position	Response	Number
Boy Scout Leader	Don't Know	10
Boy Scout Leader	Monthly	15
Boy Scout Leader	Occasionally	24
Commissioner	Monthly	12
Commissioner	Occasionally	11
Cub Leader	Monthly	2
Other	Don't Know	2
Other	Monthly	3
Other	Occasionally	5

No one replied "don't need to meet"

Appendix B cont.

How important is advanced/continuing Commissioner training?

Position	Response	Number
Boy Scout Leader	Very important	39
Boy Scout Leader	Basic training is enough	6
Commissioner	Very important	23
Cub Leader	Very important	2
Other	Very important	6
Other	Basic training is enough	3

No one replied "don't need training"

Are Commissioner Awards important?

Position	Response	Number
Boy Scout Leader	Yes	39
Commissioner	Yes	21
Commissioner	No	1
Cub Leader	Yes	2
Other	Yes	8

Are roundtables useful?

Position	Response	Number
Boy Scout Leader	Yes	43
Boy Scout Leader	No	1
Boy Scout Leader	Don't Know	2
Commissioner	Yes	23
Cub Leader	Yes	2
Other	Yes	10

Appendix C

Survey Comments

I think we have downplayed the role of the commissioner to our detriment as a movement. Some councils do well with the commissioner staff to further scouting in all areas

Commissioners can come from the ranks of "seasoned" scouters who would like to stay involved but pull back from regular troop meetings. Quality unit awards have goals that when reached, improve the work level of a troop

A mover, shaker a get thing going type of person with the knowledge to accomplish the job

I'm new (6 months) and my main thought at this point is that the lack of a district comm./unit commissioner framework can severely inhibit the downward flow of materials and information programs etc. we haven't had an effective system in 5 or 6 years, and I can already see areas where we have suffered because of it

Roundtables must be heart and soul of commissioner

Consider a website for commissioner/unit communication. Need a better mechanism to get unit roster data that is up to date

My response be biased as I have 8+ years of commissioner service in my 29 years as a scouter

After having served as a RT comm. And handing out questionnaires for input on what RT attendees would like - and then not getting even one response, I felt my effectiveness had "run its course" after three years. That was my most frustrating commissioner experience.

(author's note: RT = roundtable)

Appendix D Bibliography

Commissioner Fieldbook for Unit Service
Copyright 1990
Boy Scouts of America
No. 33617 1993 Printing Printed in U.S.A.

Commissioner Administration of Unit Service
2000 Printing
©1989 Boy Scouts of America
Irving, Texas
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