



One of the other beauties of Scouting is the fact that unlike paying jobs, one doesn't have to be "experienced" to serve as a District or Council leader. Most of our Council Presidents have had little or no experience as a volunteer Scouter; yet, they are serving as the senior volunteer for the local Council!

All of the volunteer positions in a local Council as well as within its Districts can be held by anyone. Anyone. That's how new Councils get their leadership... from volunteers that say "I can do that" and do it to the best of their ability — with training and coaching, with others' help and with faith that you're doing the best job you can.

All of the positions in Scouting — youth, volunteer and professional — also have a training course or seminar associated with it. The courses are low-cost and are usually held frequently. If you feel that "you're in the same old rut," take advantage of the next *Commissioners' Conference* or *Scouteriversity*, and attend sessions in something YOU'RE interested in. Don't know anything about Exploring? Take a session. Want to know about Learning for Life? Go to the session and learn. The same goes for your youth leaders and others associated with your unit. You do NOT have to hold a specific position to take most of the BSA's volunteer training courses, which makes all

of them ideal as refreshers or as "changes of pace" opportunities. And don't worry — attendance at most training courses does NOT obligate you to "organizing a new unit" or "training others."

Further, don't be too concerned about what other Scouters say about your unit's program. Sure, listen to their advice if they offer it, but if you don't think their ideas will work with your unit, don't do it. Talk it over with the youth of your unit and your fellow unit Scouters.

Your Commissioner is not there to find a reason to get rid of you. They're there because they care about your unit, and want to help you provide the best program possible.

Nonetheless, there are some serious reasons why your Unit Commissioner comes around your place. The biggest reason is to observe that your unit is not a "junior Klan" organization, nor a front for any kind of illegal activities. The second biggest reason is to assist you in providing for the health and safety of each youth and adult member present by evaluating the meeting place you are meeting at. There are a couple other reasons why your Unit Commissioner visits you: he or she really does CARE about your unit and you. They don't get paid for visiting

your unit. Therefore, they must really care about what your unit is doing or they wouldn't be there.

Use your Commissioner as a sounding board when things don't go well, or when you need an outsider's opinion. Your can also rely on your Commissioner as a "human newsletter." He or she can inform you of the latest information from the BSA, your Council and the District. You can find out about upcoming events that your unit might want to be a part of, and learn about programs that have changed. Finally, your Commissioner and his or her professional counterparts are great resources. I've leaned on my Commissioner to give me copies of forms, to help me fill out paperwork, and just to explain in simple English why I have to do things "the BSA/local Council way" and not the way it makes sense for me to do it.

To get over this fear, invite your Commissioner to your home or workplace on a non-Scout night or afternoon. Find out their background, and tell him or her about yours. This can go very far in getting over the fear that they are just "waiting for you to slip up" so that they can get you replaced!

Another way to get over this fear is to attend a basic training course. The basic training course follows a stan-

Mike Bowman's Third "How-To" article in an ongoing series.

How to Get Volunteers

Youth experience Scouting in packs, troops, crews, teams, and posts. The healthier the unit, the more wonderful things will happen for these youth involved in Scouting. To help make this occur, the Boys Scouts of America provides a program of unit service through adult Scouters specifically commissioned to help chartered organizations and unit leaders achieve the aims of Scouting by using the methods of Scouting. These commissioned Scouters wear a shoulder patch with a wreath surrounding the Scout symbol and are called Commissioners.

The Commissioner Service is the organization within Scouting that provides a program of unit service. Because of the importance of unit service to the successful delivery of the Scouting program, you will find Commissioners at every level of Scouting. And all of these Commissioners are there as a team to help assure that individual Scouts get the best possible program.

Volunteerism is great! I agree 100%. So tell me where do I get the volunteers to make it work? Ouch! That is a tough question, but one that we all have to answer. Here are some ideas that can help you form a successful recruiting strategy to find more volunteers for your commissioner staff:

For additional recruiting ideas see the pamphlet, *Selecting District People, No. 34514*, and the videotape, *Recruiting District Volunteers, AV-06V002*.

1. Help Wanted!

Determine the positions on the Commissioner staff, and then which need to be filled. Start out by asking a few questions. Are the people already there doing the job? Are they effective? Write a job description for each job that includes both general expectations drawn from training material, and unique expectations based on particular neighborhoods, people and unit needs. And for each position that you are going to recruit for, write a brief list of qualifications the person needs to be successful.

2. Find the Best Prospects for the Job.

Don't rule anything out right away. Instead, consider many sources. Ask people you trust for recommendations. Spread the search wide. As you start to get ideas and information, list possible prospects for each job, matching their qualities with open jobs, then determine who has the best set of qualities to fit the job.

3. Research your Top Prospects.

If you really want someone, take some time to learn about their interests, abilities, and motivations.

4. Prepare for the Appointment.

Shape your approach by the prospect's interests, abilities, and motivations. If you believe another member of your staff can make the best approach with that particular prospect, ask them. Before anyone meets with the prospect, anticipate their questions and objections, and decide in advance how you will answer them. You may be asked for more information, so be ready. It wouldn't hurt to have a page or two of bullets about the job to give the prospect, with

attention to items that match his/her interests. (Do not flood the prospect with everything you can find on Commissioner service. They probably won't be ready for more than a couple of pages.)

5. Make an Appointment.

Meet the Prospect face-to-face. Do not recruit over the telephone. Call and invite the prospect to coffee or ask to stop by his/her home or office. Pick the best time and place for your prospect to be comfortable and not distracted by work pressures or home pressures. It may even be a good idea for the spouse to be present, and to sell the spouse on being part of the commitment too.

6. Never Ever Recruit Alone.

Make sure to take someone with you that the prospect knows and is comfortable with. One person should talk and the other should listen (this person will evaluate and help you do better in future recruiting efforts).

7. Make the Sale.

Introduce everyone and make sure to take some time to get settled in comfortably. Break the ice by talking about common interests, especially things that the prospect is most familiar with; e.g. hobby, job, Scouting background, family, etc. You should have an idea of areas based on your research. "Sell the Sizzle." Give the prospect an exciting, enthusiastic, and brief pitch on the Commissioner service and youth without getting bogged down in tedious details. Talk about the importance of serving units that will most interest the prospect. Describe the job you want the prospect to do. Be specific. Don't be afraid to empha-

size that the job is important to youth and the community. Remind the prospect that he/she is the best person for the job. Ask for questions. Be sure the prospect understands what is expected. Answer these questions briefly and positively. Be honest. Be prepared to overcome objections. Listen for comments from your prospect that can help you sell him/her on the job. Know when to close the sale. When the prospect is nodding yes and agreeing, close the sale. Don't keep on selling, if it is clear that the prospect is ready to agree or obviously not interested. Recognize that people work for people. Stress the participation of people who are of interest to the prospect. Don't overlook the friendship and fellowship that will evolve.

8. Ask for a Commitment.

You need this person or you wouldn't have bothered to go to so much trouble recruiting. Say so. Be patient and wait for an answer. Don't leave without an answer, if you can avoid it. If the person wants to think about it and call you later, that may be a clue that you are about to lose the sale. (About 75-90% of these answers lead to a no) This is an emergency. But don't panic. Tell them you'll be happy to hear back, but before you leave, you'd be happy to answer any questions or discuss things more. Go back to troublesome moments in the interview and look for ways to repair, if possible. Once you've done your best (whether you succeeded or not), don't over-prolong the appointment and abuse the privilege of the visit. Don't wait for the call, if the prospect wanted to think about things. Ask for another appointment the next day suggesting a time and place. Then follow through with a second visit.