

Occoneechee Council



Commissioner News

A publication for and about Scouters involved in Commissioner Service

October 2007 Issue

<http://www.campdurant.com/Commissioner/Service/news/2007/10.pdf>

Special Edition

As is our tradition, this issue will be dedicated to providing information from our annual Commissioners' Conference and our annual College of Commissioner Science. We will resume our regular columns in November.

31st College of Commissioner Science

We had 55 participants and many of the participants also served as instructors. All indications are that this annual training and networking event was very beneficial and worthwhile.

19 participants responded to our on-line survey and over 70% gave the college positive scores. To see the full report, visit the following URL...
www.campdurant.com/ccer.pdf

Monthly Cabinet Meetings Survey Results

Twenty seven Scouters responded to our site survey. Over 55% were in favor of the current site, the current program, and the current refreshments.

To see the full report, visit the following URL...
www.campdurant.com/cscmsr.pdf

DC Info Packet Survey Results

Eight district commissioners and ADCs representing six districts responded to our survey. Over 87% look forward to the packet and appreciate all the program materials typically provided in the pack.

To see the full report, visit the following URL...
www.campdurant.com/dcipsr.pdf

Commissioners' Conference

The rest of this newsletter contains information from our October 12th Commissioners' Conference. We had 45 participants, which included (14 professionals and 31 volunteers). We had Commissioners and District Executives from every district in our council.

They Did It Right!

John Akerman, our council's Scout Executive, talked about the recent "lost troop" incident in the North Carolina mountains. Based on all available information, the leaders did everything right. What started off as a possibly disastrous media event turned into positive PR that was communicated literally around the world. One of our council staff members was on holiday in Paris, France and heard about it.

Centennial Award Update

Connie Bowes reported on the council-wide progress.

64% of the commitment forms have been turned in (we needed 60% to qualify as a quality council).

Connie announced that award patches, plaques, and certificate will be available the last week in October. Check with the Scout Shop.

What Do You Think?

The participants were divided into four groups and each group was asked to independently come up with answers to a series of questions. Many of these questions were asked at last year's conference.

What are the two biggest problems that our council faces?

Group	Responses
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of a quality program • Good communications (both ways)
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth – Youth and Volunteer Retention • Consistency in the quality of communication to avoid the feeling of inequality within districts
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support from public (Scouting not as visible as it could be) • Poor PR – Need more press releases and positive publicity
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retention • Recruiting (no school access)

What are the two biggest problems facing Commissioner Service in our Council?

Group	Responses
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioner recruiting/staffing • Training of commissioners and educating the rest of Scouting about Commissioner Service.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Placement of commissioners in units with the most need. • Convincing units of the importance of training of unit leaders
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of hands-on training (sharing experience) • Recruiting younger adults into Commissioner Service roles.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication going both ways. Council down seems to be working, but unit up needs help. • Roundtable attendance and promotion.

What are the two biggest problems facing our districts?

Group	Responses
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of funding and budgeting issues. • Effective volunteer management; dwindling volunteer numbers
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retaining and growing membership, volunteers, units, and district committees. • Training: encourage leaders to take training and tracking training records.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Latino opportunities – Need resources • Inconsistent adherence with BSA policies.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retention/Recruiting • Communication and Roundtables

What does volunteer driven, professional guided mean to you?

Group	Responses
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scouting is owned by volunteers and kept on track by professionals
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers get the work done and professionals support the volunteers.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers are steadfast in front lines; Professionals are bridge to National HQ (volunteers are not amateurs)
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers provide standards; Professionals provide resources.

How can the professional staff help volunteers reach there full potential?

Group	Responses
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know all the available resources and provide same in a timely manner.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback is a gift. Know the difference between listening and paying attention.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Returning calls promptly.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No micro managing volunteers (stay in your own lane and don't crowd) • DE's who do their job. • Provide current info and up-to-date news. • Empowerment of volunteers.

How can volunteers help professionals reach their full potential?

Group	Responses
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet commitments and follow through (don't drop the ball)
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be available, be prompt, and provide support when asked/needed.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Empowerment (learn when to ask for help)
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open communication so professionals know what is going on.

What Are Your Current District Challenges Regarding Centennial Award Participation by Units?

District	Challenge
Mawat	Small, struggling units always see paperwork as not important. Large units are doing a lot of program and don't seem to care about paperwork.
Tuocs	Centennial Award campaign came on the heels of rechartering and some units felt they had done enough.
Falls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of training so Commissioners can effectively sell the process to their units. Forms are vague and not as intuitive as needed.
Baden-Powell	Small units in low growth areas (older congregations; few boys)
Moore	Having to pay for a unit's involvement with incentives like Packmaster and Troopmaster (shows they really are not interested in the type of culture BSA is trying to nurture).
Crosswinds	One of our largest units was very adamant about not setting goals.

Centennial Award Goals

Our National Council says the goal is to see units improve, even those who are less than 100% of their goals.

Remember... Commissioners can grant a unit quality unit status based on significant improvement.

What Made Your District's Centennial Award Program a Success?

- We let units know that this is BSA policy, not an option.
- Dedicated Centennial Award Coordination team in district to help units.
- Sit down with unit leaders and show them how to fill out the form.

Suggestions for Helping the Centennial Awards Program Do Better

- If a unit makes its goals and earns the award all four years, then the special recognition patch in 2010 is FREE!
- Create a dedicated web page for Centennial Awards info, tips, forms, etc.
- Show units how to use their Centennial Award status to help recruit new members.
- Create a culture where pride in Centennial Award ownership is so important that everyone wants it.
- Learning a once-a-year process like this may take several years of training unit leaders, especially if units have a lot of turnover in their committee. Spoon-feed if necessary. The results are worth the time invested.
- Use MyBSA resources to complete the Centennial Award process.
- When you evaluate 2007 progress, go ahead and prepare 2008 forms. They are much easier to read and already are in triplicate.
- Need annual and transition training notices (tickler type e-mail system). Need more communications about what training is required for each direct contact leader position.

NOTE: *We discussed the idea of giving free advancement badges only to units that earn the Centennial Award. In a group vote, we voted 2 for this and 35 against it with 3 abstaining. Given our history of providing free badges to all units, this change in policy would be viewed as punitive and might shut down smaller units in poor communities.*

Centennial Award Challenges

- Retention math is not thoroughly understood. Retention is the number of youth rechartered or rejoined divided by youth at the end of the charter period.
- Difficulty getting seasoned Scouts to be recruiters (to bring in new boys).
- Until you do rechartering, you frequently do not know if gains and losses helps or hurts. It is being approached like many people approach tax time.
- Webelos crossing over gives a bonus to the Troop and a loss to the Pack.

NOTE: *Our council retains approximately 70% (and we are the leading metro council in the USA.*

When Districts Recharter

Jan	Tuocs and Orange districts
Feb	Baden-Powell and 3 Rivers districts
Mar	Crosswinds, Falls, Hemlock, and Neuse River districts
Apr	Great Northern, Mawat, and Moore districts
May	Kia Kima district
Sep-Dec	In-School units and Soccer in Scouting
Dec	District Committees Council Committees Merit Badge Counselors District Commissioners Council Commissioner and ACCs Other Non Unit Affiliated Persons

Laurel Leaves = Service

Susan Long talked about how professional staff and commissioners are the only two groups with laurel leaves depicted on their position patch. These leaves signify our dedication to service (helping others succeed). Whereas both commissioners and professionals are dealing with a lot of different personalities and issues, the professionals must also deal with the business (keeping our council solvent and protecting it from people and events that could hurt it). Therefore, if your DE is unable to respond as quickly as you would like, just remember that your DE has a lot on his or her plate (that you do not).

2007 Goals Recap

Susan Long reviewed the twelve 2007 Commissioner Service objectives that were listed in the Council Operations...

www.campdurant.com/cpop/comsvc.pdf

Our successes are as follows:

Objective	Status
1. Recruit and fully engage an Assistant Council Commissioner for each Council Vice- President in order to form Key Threes for each committee.	Only 2 active (out of 6 VP committees)
2. Recruit sufficient numbers of unit commissioners to achieve the National goal of 3 units per unit commissioner.	Improved from a 1:4 in 2006 to a 1:3.7 now
3. Develop a "lifesaver" team of highly experienced commissioners in each service area whose primary responsibility is to identify and save struggling units.	Team formed, but not being utilized. New mission might be warranted.
4. Conduct a District Commissioner's training session within 60 days after the Council's Annual Business Meeting (District Workshop) to train new District Commissioners and orient previous Commissioners to the program and policies of the Council.	Done
6. Conduct a general session, with the Council Vice President of District Operations, following the District Workshop that results in District Key Threes that review, set, and adopt goals for the Centennial Quality District Award.	Limited Success
7. Maintain and enhance leadership and training by participation in Commissioner Basic Training, the College of Commissioner Science and the University of Scouting.	Done

Coordinated Year-Round Recharter Process

Susan Long provided a presentation that was part of her Doctor of Commissioner Science project contract. Her PowerPoint presentation is on-line at the following URL...

www.campdurant.com/cyrrp.html

Dial-Up User Alert: This file is over 425 KBs in size.

Rechartering On-Line Tutorial

Susan Long talked about how you can download the on-line tutorial for using on-line rechartering. Once you have it on a memory stick or CD, you can take it to Roundtables or other events to show unit leaders how easy it is. Her PowerPoint version is on-line at the following URL...

www.campdurant.com/ort.html

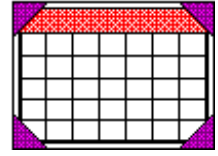
Dial-Up User Alert: This file is over 3.8 MBs in size.

Special Offer

Our Council Commissioner, Jack Nichols, made the following special offer...

If a commissioner knows of a unit that wants either Packmaster or Troopmaster, the council will make it available to that unit to help simplify rechartering.

Plan Ahead



- **Next Commissioners Cabinet Meeting** – November 8th at the First United Methodist Church in downtown Cary. We do not have a cabinet meeting in October because we will be meeting at the annual planning conference and the annual college events.
 - **Council Camporee** – Oct 26 - 28, 2007 at Camp Reeves with the theme of "Back to Brownsea". This will be a Boy Scouts and Venturing Scouts only event. Webelos Scouts who attend with a Scout Troop may also attend. Tentative plans are underway to offer activities relating to basic camping skills, such as Camping, Backpacking, Wilderness Survival, Pioneering, Orienteering, etc.
 - **University of Scouting** – Nov. 3. Instructors are still needed. If interested, contact [Sue Herring](#)
 - **Coordinated Council Committee Meeting** – Nov. 13 at Wake Technical Community College. Check the council program calendar for details.
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Who Writes This Stuff?

This publication features articles written by members of Commissioner Service and Scouters like you. If you would like to submit an article or a news bite for consideration, please contact either [Jack Nichols](#) or [Charles Good](#).

