

**2015 SCOUTING CHAIRMANS CONFERENCE**

**Moderator: Shayne Abrahams  
October 27, 2015  
11:54 am CT**

Shayne Abrahams: Hello?

Kathy Nees: Good morning, this is - or good afternoon, this is Kathy from the American Legion of Iowa. We have with us our Department Chairman, Don Rasmussen; Department Vice Commander, Scott Moline; and 6th District Chairman - or District Commander, Tim McLaughlin.

Shayne Abrahams: Hi, good afternoon. This is Shayne Abrahams, National Headquarters.  
How is everyone?

((Crosstalk))

Shayne Abrahams: Great. Thank you so much for joining us. We'll be starting momentarily so just relax.

Kathy Nees: Okay, great.

Jim Stewart: Hey Shayne, this is Jim Stewart.

Shayne Abrahams: Hey. How are you, sir?

Jim Stewart: I'm doing just fine. I'm sitting here in your office area.

Shayne Abrahams: Great.

(Jim Lewis): (Michelle) has been very, very accommodating.

Shayne Abrahams: Great.

(Michelle): Absolutely. I'm here. Hi Kathy. Hi Shayne.

((Crosstalk))

Man: Oh. She's on the phone too. I'm waving at her.

Kathy Nees: We're all waving at you (Michelle).

(Michelle): All right.

Kathy Nees: We've got to make this a video conference one of these days, so we can all see each other.

(Michelle): That would be nice.

Shayne Abrahams: Hopefully we can get on the ground in 2017. So that's the plan.

Kathy Nees: That'd be awesome.

Shayne Abrahams: Yeah.

Kathy Nees: And you can see our expression when we go aw, shucks. And that's really not probably what we'll say. Keep it clean, right Shayne?

Shayne Abrahams: Oh yeah.

Kathy Nees: Shayne, who is going to be joining us from the Boy Scout Council from the (unintelligible)?

(Marcos Nava): Hi. This is (Marcos Nava). I'm a team member for the National Alliances. I will be here. And with...

Kathy Nees: I think I've met you before.

(Marcos Nava): Yes, hi. And with me is Miss Barbara Powers. She is a volunteer in our committee and a volunteer at the local council here.

Kathy Nees: Thank you very much. And you're in Texas? Is that correct?

(Marcos Nava): That is correct. We're in Irving, Texas.

Kathy Nees: Okay. Thank you.

Jim Stewart: Hi Barbara. How are you doing? It's Jim Stewart.

Barbara Powers: Hi. I'm doing fine.

Jim Stewart: I haven't seen you in a couple of weeks.

Barbara Powers: Well we had a good meeting didn't we?

Jim Stewart: Yes, we did.

Jerry Lollar: Jerry Lollar from Colorado.

Man: Hello.

Kathy Nees: Hi Jerry.

Jerry Lollar: How are you doing lady?

(Larry Whitmeyer): Hello. This is (Larry Whitmeyer) from Oregon.

Bill Wiseman: This is Bill Wiseman from the State of Nebraska.

(Lee Johnson): This is (Lee Johnson) from the State of Arkansas.

(Jim Davidson): (Jim Davidson) from the Department of Washington.

Wayne Chatfield: This is Wayne Chatfield from the Department of Arizona.

Ray Untiet: Ray Untiet, Department of Alaska.

Kathy Nees: Jim Stewart, where are you from, sir?

Jim Stewart: I'm from Nevada.

Kathy Nees: Okay. I'm just making a list of all of the...

Wayne Newland: Wayne Newland from Florida just joined the line.

(Lee Johnson): This is (Lee Johnson) from the Department of Arkansas. I think maybe I walked on somebody.

Shayne Abrahams: Okay. Ladies and gentlemen, we're going to - I'm going to give folks probably another 90 seconds to join and then we'll get started.

Kathy Nees: Okay.

Man: Hello?

Shayne Abrahams: Hello?

(Rich Jakes): (Rich Jakes), South Carolina.

(Richard Vaughn): (Richard Vaughn), to answer.

((Crosstalk))

Shayne Abrahams: Welcome. We'll be starting shortly.

Elwin Spray: Hi. This is Elwin also.

Kathy Nees: Where are you from Elwin?

Elwin Spray: Elwin from - and I'm from the National Scouting.

(Rich Jakes): Hey (Michelle), did you get my name, (Rich Jakes), South Carolina?

(Michelle): Yes.

(Rich Jakes): All right. Thanks.

Wayne Newland: You got Florida, didn't you?

(Michelle): Yes, I did.

Wayne Newland: Thank you.

(Lee Johnson): And Arkansas?

(Michelle): Yes, I did.

(Lee Johnson): Thank you.

((Crosstalk))

Man: New York, as well (Michelle)?

(Michelle): I did not have New York. (Scott Hayden)?

Man: Beautiful sunny New Hampshire?

Man: Foggy Oregon.

(Michelle): New Hampshire and Oregon.

(William Benson): Maine?

(Michelle): William Benson?

(William Benson): Yes.

(Michelle): Yes.

Man: Did you get Montana, (Michelle)?

(Michelle): Montana? No. But I have you now.

Man: Okay. Thank you.

Jerry Lollar: (Michelle), this is (Unintelligible).

(Michelle): Say that again.

Jerry Lollar: (Unintelligible).

(Michelle): What - what department?

Jerry Lollar: Department of Colorado.

(Michelle): Colorado. Jerry?

Jerry Lollar: You got me.

(Michelle): Yes.

Jerry Lollar: Thank you.

Wayne Chatfield: This is Wayne Chatfield from Arizona. Did you get me?

(Michelle): Yes.

Wayne Chatfield: Okay. Thank you.

(Michelle): Kathy, who all did you have with you?

Kathy Nees: I have Department Chairman, Don Rasmussen.

(Michelle): Okay.

Kathy Nees: Department Vice Commander, Scott Moline and 6th District Commander, Tim McLaughlin.

(Michelle): Did they register the last two?

Kathy Nees: I believe so. I registered them I thought.

(Michelle): Okay.

Kathy Nees: We're all gathered at the state headquarters here to talk on one phone. So...

(Michelle): Okay.

Kathy Nees: ...any information that you send to me will get distributed to them.

(Michelle): Okay.

Shayne Abrahams: Okay. Has everyone had an opportunity to check in with (Michelle)? Did we miss anyone (Michelle)?



(Michelle): Yeah. I have several that are missing.

Shayne Abrahams: Okay. What we'll do - I would imagine they'll be joining us once - once we get started. So because I'm sensitive of everybody's time and I appreciate everybody's time. I want to welcome you and thank everybody for joining our third annual second consecutive teleconference of department chairmen.

We're so pleased to - to have you join us. Last year's conference - teleconference session was - was a great success and again, I thank you all for joining us.

What I'd like to do now is turn it over to Mr. Elwin Spray, Chairman, Committee Relations Taskforce, Boy Scouts of America, to lead us in the invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

Elwin Spray: Thank you Shayne. I'd like to ask everybody to just take a minute and - and think about ourselves as we gather in friendship and fellowship and remember that we're gathering in - with the Lord watching over us.

And ask him to - to continue to watch over us and ask him to make this a learning experience for all of us. And in his name we say Amen. At this time let me ask you to take a look around wherever you are, and look for an American flag. Hopefully you've got one posted.

If not, I've got a couple of small ones here I'd be more than happy to share with you. But in any case, let me ask you to repeat after me, the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States of America on my - let's see, I'm sorry - I started to day on my honor.

I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America. And to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all. Shayne?

Shayne Abrahams: All righty. Thank you very much Elwin. We were scheduled originally, to be joined by Chairman (Anderson) and Michael Surbaugh, Chief Scout Exec for the Boy Scouts of America. Surbaugh is going to join us later, probably about 1:00, to bring greetings.

And unfortunately, Chairman (Anderson) won't be able to join us. He had a previous commitment. So on behalf of Chairman (Anderson) and our National Commander, I would like to again, thank all of you for joining us today. I think today's session is going to be packed full of information.

And we're guaranteed that everyone will get something out of it. Having said that, I'll spend a little time and talk about the objectives. And we have two sides with the objectives. Obviously we have the BCA side and we also have the American Legion.

As I was just reminded, thank you Marcos, when Mr. Surbaugh joins us - actually let's have Marcos share a little bit about Chief Scout Exec Surbaugh.

Marcos Nava: Thank you Shayne. Good afternoon all. I just want to read our Chief Scout Executive's biography. Michael Surbaugh is the 13th Chief Scout Executive of the Boy Scouts of America, headquartered in Irving, Texas. Scouting was the essential component of Mike's (unintelligible) from early on.

He was born in (Charleston), West Virginia, the son of a steel plant manager. His family moved often (unintelligible) became a touchstone of consistency.

No matter where he went, Mike found a ready group of friends and mentors waiting in a new Scout troop.

As Mike worked towards his Eagle Scout rank in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, he had a brush with his future career. At this first council, Scout Executive met with all the Eagle Scout candidates to discuss the value of leadership. Mike's goal was to be a corporate attorney.

But the Scout Executive recognized Mike's enthusiasm for Scouting and told him that one day he could be in the Scout Executive's chair. Eventually, many years later, he would do just that.

After graduating from Salem College with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Youth Agency Administration, Mike chose Scouting for his career. Mike served as a District Executive in Jacksonville, Florida in 1984 and then served as a Senior District Executive and Program Director in (unintelligible), New York.

Then became Director of Field Services, Director of Development, Field Director and Development Director in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Mike's real aspiration was to run a BSA high venture base.

But rather than to hold out for such a role, he served as the Scout Executive in both Sioux Falls, South Dakota and (Appleton), Wisconsin. In 2007 he was asked to interview as a Scout Executive in Pittsburgh.

He accepted the position at the behest of his wife (Lisa), who reminded him of the prophetic words from the - from that (unintelligible) Scout Executive years earlier when he - when Mike became an Eagle Scout.

From Pittsburgh, Mike was promoted to BSA Group Director at the National Council Center in 2014, a position he held until named Chief Scout Executive, in 2015. Mike is an Eagle Scout and an Eagle - and an Order of the Arrow Vigil Honor Member.

He has completed wood badge. He also is proud to have served as Camp Director and a member of summer camp staff for 12 years.

When he is not working to advance BSA's mission, Mike spends his free time with (Lisa), visiting and hiking in the USA national parks, and riding their Harley Davidson motorcycles. As stated earlier, our Chief Scout Executive will be joining us at approximately 1:00 for some greetings and remarks.

Thank you.

Shayne Abrahams: I appreciate it Marcos. Thank you. We're excited to have - continue our rejuvenated relationship with Boy Scouts of America. Again, I thank you all and I bring greetings on behalf of our National Commander Barnett and our Americanism Chairman, Richard Anderson, both of which could not joint us today.

So having said that, I'll just spend a little time talking about the objectives from - from the TOL, the American Legion side of the house.

First and foremost, I wanted to provide a forum by which our Scouting chairmen and their designees could have an opportunity to sit and discuss relevant issues related to Scouting in American Legion, the American Legion family.

I also wanted to give you access to the Boy Scouts of America National Headquarters. And if you have issues or concerns we can address those simultaneously. They could apprise of emerging issues related to the Boy Scouts of America.

And lastly, I want to set the stage for us to connect and create a community in Scouting within the Boy - the American Legion. As you know, this - again, this is our second annual teleconference. And next year, hopefully, will be our last.

And with the goal of 2017 we can be on the ground and have an opportunity to - to discuss these important matters face to face. So having said that, I'll turn it over to Marcos. And if there are some objectives from the BSA side of the house, please share those at this time.

Marcos Nava: Thank you Shayne. I want to thank you all for taking time to join us. I thank all of our Scouting volunteers that will be presenting later today. I know that what we're doing is important. I know that there's a youth out there waiting to join Scouting or stay in Scouting.

And this only happens when we have empowered volunteers. And through these sessions that we've had and will have in the future, this is the way we will empower all of you to be able to do Scouting at your local communities.

I also want to make myself available at any time, with any of the 54 state posts that any of you can call me any time. And just to prove that, I will give you my cell phone number so that you can call me with any questions any time. And I promise that I will return your call with the answer.

If I don't - if I know the answer right then, I'll give it to you. And if I don't, I will tell you I will research it, and I will get back to you. My phone number is (214) 794-9374. I also want to encourage you to look into the Boy Scout Web site.

Go to [www.Scouting.org](http://www.Scouting.org) and just take a couple of hours or some time, and look into what's there because there's a lot of good information posted on our Web site. With that, thank you again for joining us.

Shayne Abrahams: Great. Thank you Marcos. As you all know, this was the first youth program adopted by the American Legion. And we are the largest non-civic charter organization with (Ben) Scouting, representing more than - I've seen a couple of numbers.

But I think we're bouncing somewhere between 52,000 and 54,000 youth. Those are a lot of young people that are impacted by our programs and what you do. So again, I can't thank you enough.

Having said that, I think I'm going to - actually let's pause for a second and I'll - if anyone has joined us since we started, this is their opportunity to be recognized so that they can - (Michelle) can record it for the minutes. Has there any - anybody joined us lately? Any departments? Okay. Having said that...

(John Duncan): This is...

Shayne Abrahams: I'm sorry? Go ahead.

(John Duncan): This is (John Duncan). I am a volunteer with the Boy Scouts of America and I'll - I'm on the agenda in an hour. And so I'm here.

Marcos Nava: Thank you (John). Thank you for joining us.

Shayne Abrahams: Great. Great.

(John Duncan): Thank you.

Shayne Abrahams: Welcome (John). So moving right along, I would like to pass it over to Miss Barbara Powers. Barbara serves on the community relations taskforce for the Boy Scouts of America. And I'll let her give a little background information about herself.

And she's going to spend some time with us talking about the charter organization representative training. Barbara?

Barbara Powers: Thank you. A little background about myself - I have been doing Scouting for more years than I want to admit. I started with Boy Scouts as a Tiger Leader when my son joined as a Tiger. So he is now - he's got his MBA and he is working, so I'm not going to tell you how many years I've been involved.

But I have continued throughout - stayed with the pack, became chairman of the pack. As a matter of fact, I grew that pack from 23 boys to 165 boys in four years. Then went onto Boy Scouts. I've held Scout - assistant Scout master positions, committee chair positions, all sorts of positions.

I'm also part of venturing crew. I'm chair of venturing crew. So I've continued to stay involved. I represent the Kiwanis on our community relationships taskforce. And I encourage Kiwanis clubs to support Scouting. So there is a little bit of my background.

And I could go on but I won't bore you with that. I do want to mention - Marcos gave you his cell phone number and I can speak from personal experience, he will call you back. This is one very dedicated Scout Executive here at BSA. And he will call you back.

So when he gives you his cell phone number he means it. My objective today is to encourage you to begin Scout units. As department chairs, I understand that you can influence - the state where you are located and influence the district and the post to begin Scout units.

BSA has developed a brand new materials this year. The publication date was 2015 on the Chartered Organization Representative Guidebook. And that's what I'm going to be reviewing a little bit here today.

Because when you can get a unit started, when you can encourage, when you find the post that wants to start Scouting and you first get a volunteer chartered organization representative, they need to be trained. They need to know what their job is. And so we have a guidebook that will tell them all of this.

There are many things they are to do. And a good charter organization representative can assure that the unit can be successful. Okay. Excuse me.

Kathy Nees: How do we get a copy of that guidebook for our people here?

Man: And what's the number?

Barbara Powers: That guidebook - did you send that guidebook to everybody Shayne?



Shayne Abrahams: Yeah. You have two options. When you - it's posted on our Web site with all the other conference presentation information.

Barbara Powers: Yeah. There you go. Yes.

Shayne Abrahams: And I think for about 99% of you, once you registered - actually I believe I forwarded all of the information to - to everyone that we have on record in terms of if you did register.

So if not, just go to [www.Legion.org/Scouting](http://www.Legion.org/Scouting) and you can download all of the presentations from today's conference - teleconference call.

Barbara Powers: Great. Thank you. The material is written so that somebody who does not have much experience in Scouting would know what their job is as a charter organization representative and would understand the Scouting unit, how it functions, how BSA as a whole, functions.

So I don't know how much Scouting experience some of you have. Some of you may have a lot and there may be some I'm speaking to right now, that have very little. So if I do mention a little bit about how Scouting is organized then bear with me, for those that know much about Scouting.

Okay. Many of you may think that well, I already know what a charter organization representative does. That person signs the applications for the adult leaders and that is it. Well not quite.

But I do see a lot of charter organization representatives that that is what seems to be the main part of what they consider their job. And it is a function of their job. But your job is so much more than just signing the application. You are to approve the adult applications. That is true.

But the charter organization representative serves as a voting member of the district committee and the local council. And that's something that a lot of our charter organization representatives don't know. I serve on the district committee at our BSA district.

And when we have our annual meeting, we send out notices to all the charter organization representatives, inviting them to come to our annual meeting. And I have a lot of them that ask me, why am I getting this? And I try to tell them, because you are a voting member of this committee.

And they just have no idea. So that is something that is very important. It is a way for you to represent the American Legion, to represent your organization to BSA. We also want to encourage our charter organization representatives to serve on one of the district committees.

Because the district has several standing committees. And we need your involvement. So that is very important. The guidebook, at the very beginning, will list the checklist of what your job is. Now it's just going to list a checklist at the very front.

But later in the guidebook, it will go into more detail on each one of them. I'm not going to go into detail on each one of them. I'm just telling you how the guidebook is formulated. But I do want to tell you some of the key things that you need to know as the charter organization representative.

You're a member of the unit K3. So that means you need to meet with the committee chair. And you need to meet with the unit leader. A lot of our CORs are not aware of that.

I serve as a unit commissioner to two units and so I ask to meet with the CORs and to have them come meet with the unit leader and the chairman for this very reason. A key thing that the charter organization representative does is to serve as a liaison between the organization and the unit.

And that is a key thing because let's say that there's a - a service project that the - that your organization needs. Then that COR needs to communicate with the unit and say here's how you can help us. So you're a key representative there.

It's also good to - to then as the representative, go back to your organization and say I - we need to recognize our leaders in our units. Or we need to recognize the charter presentation whenever the charters are renewed.

So you can schedule those because you - you go back and you represent that unit to the American Legion post or the - the one that is sponsoring the unit. Okay. The guidebook is going to let you know (unintelligible) what your job is so I don't want to - okay.

After it tells you your critical job it's going to also explain how Scouting works. Because remember I told you that it's written from a standpoint that (unintelligible) can be the COR.

So suppose they have somebody say well, I care for Scouting, I'll be glad to help these youth, but maybe they never were involved in Scouting. Well they need to know exactly how Scouting works so that they understand the lingo, they understand what they're dealing with.

One of the things that Scouting, how it works, is through the charter process. And the material explains that. The BSA will issue an annual charter to your

organization to have - to operate the unit. The charter organization will then provide leadership.

It will provide facilities, encouragement, motivation, support to the unit.

Kathy Nees: What is the fee to charter an organization now?

Barbara Powers: The fee is \$40.00.

Kathy Nees: Annually?

Barbara Powers: Annually. The charters are renewed annually. And there's usually a meeting, a charter renewal meeting that is held with a charter organization representative, the unit commissioner may be in there and the district executive as well as the unit leader and the - the committee chair, to review how the unit has been functioning.

To review the journey to excellence and to review the agreement. Because every year there is a - an agreement that the - the organization signs stating that we agree to do these items.

As a matter of fact, the guidebook as the back of the guidebook, has the charter agreement there. And it - thank you. It's on page 23. Okay. And it will show you exactly what it is that you're agreeing to.

But that should be done every year. And the fee is \$40.00. So thank you for asking that question. I appreciate that. Feel free to ask questions as needed. Okay. When the post decides it wants to start a unit, then of course you need to find a volunteer that's willing to be the charter organization representative.

You contact your local district or the council and they will bring the papers to do that. One of the things you need to find early on, after getting your COR, is the chair, the committee chair. That position is critical and the guidebook explains that, that here's how you would organize your unit.

You want to (unintelligible) committee chair because a strong committee will help to assure this unit flourishes. Okay. The committee and the COR will then find the unit leader. The unit leader in a Cub pack is the Cub pack (unintelligible) Scout Master (unintelligible).

Shayne Abrahams: I'm going to take a quick pause just to - just to remind you folks to - if you're not speaking please - please mute your phones. There you go. Thank you.

Barbara Powers: Okay. Where was I?

((Crosstalk))

Marcos Nava: We've - as Barbara is getting her thoughts, going back to the agenda, to the outline, just keep in mind that one of the most important things, and she mentioned it, and later on we're going to hear more about it, what you will do as a charter organization representative, is to select the adult leaders, number one.

Number two, is that you want to encourage them to do the proper training. And then she will now talk about that. And you'll find that outline on training - the types of trainings that are available, on page number 7 of the resource guide that we're talking about.

Barbara Powers: Right. And making sure that your leaders are trained, is very important. As a matter of fact, I believe that some of the - the unit leader and the committee chair especially, need to be trained for their specific task in order to renew their charter.

Early on, at the very beginning, every adult needs youth protection training. So there is specific youth protection training for venturing. So the venturing program has a separate - because it's co-ed.

And it's - so the - anybody who is chartering a venturing crew, you can't just do the - the regular Boy Scout youth protection training. you must do the venturing YPT in order to - to be certified and listed as youth protection trained.

So I do have some people who sometimes some of the units they go and they do the regular training. And then they go and they turn in their application and it won't be accepted because they didn't do the right training. So that's why I'm specifying that there is different training.

That training lasts for two years. So you'd get a certificate. It can be done online on the Scouting Web site, [www.MyScouting.org](http://www.MyScouting.org). And you can - then after you take in the training, print off your certificate and that - the copy of that certificate can go in with the application.

Marcos Nava: Barbara, for those that have difficulties with using the internet, let me give you a contact, Scouting University, for those that need help, and you can call directly to that number. That number is (972) 580-2000. And you can get help regarding training, there.

Man: What was that number again?

Marcos Nava: (972) 580-2000.

Shayne Abrahams: And that can be found on page 7 of the Chartered Organization Representative Handbook as well.

Marcos Nava: Yeah.

Barbara Powers: Right. Good. More information about how Scouting operates in terms of your unit that I think is important to know, is that the units belong to your organization. So you are the owner so to speak, of that organization. The council and the district have some responsibilities.

The Boy Scout Council and district have responsibilities too, that we try to fulfill. Some of the things are we're going to provide services and facilities. Some of our services, and I say our because I do serve as a volunteer on the district committee.

And so - we - we train. Our district schedules training. We have the charter organization representative training. We have the unit specific leadership training. We do a lot of training. The youth protection training. So we provide training. We do advancement assistance on that level.

We also provide as a - the council provides facilities, camping facilities that your unit can participate in. And they're no charge. We don't have to pay for a fee to use these facilities, which is fantastic. We also provide activities.

For instance, our district has a Cub Scout even this weekend that we encourage your units to participate in. So that's some of the things that the council and district is going to do to provide for your - your unit.

Marcos Nava: If - if you have any questions, feel free - please feel free to state them. Other than that, Barbara's got about another five more minutes of presentation. And then we'll open it up for Q&A. And has - who just joined us a couple of seconds ago? Okay.

Carl Atkinson: That would be Carl Atkinson, Michigan Department Scouting Chair.

Marcos Nava: Thank you so much. Okay Barbara.

Barbara Powers: Thank you. Okay. All right. On page 6 of the guidebook there's a - a box with - around some boldfaced writing. And so I just want to be sure that you're aware because something that I - I tell my students that when anything is in a box then you've got to read it. It's important.

The charter organization approved all the adult leaders and committee members for the unit. The approval occurs at several times. It occurs whenever that adult joins initially. But it also occurs at charter renewal. So you approved these adults at charter renewal, so that's every year.

You also approve them whenever they're changing position. So if somebody is changing from say a committee member to a den leader and they're changing their registration information that takes a new application and you would then have to approve that.

So those are some of the times that you would approve. Are there any questions? Everybody knows all about charter organization representation?

Carl Atkinson: This is Carl in Michigan. One - I've been a charter rep for our local Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts for maybe four or five years now.



Barbara Powers: Wonderful.

Carl Atkinson: One of - one of the more - more challenging situations I experience is the people problems. And would you suggest that maybe these should be taken care of more with the local unit committee? Or should the charter rep get involved?

Barbara Powers: Now what do you mean exactly people problem? Because the charter organization rep can mentor and may have to intervene at some cases, depending on the situation. I do think that the charter organization rep should be there with the committee to help.

We've had - we had a situation in our Boy Scout troop that I'm a - that - well we've had several situations where the committee and the charter organization rep, together, had to intervene and had to mediate. So I - I think it's a together situation.

Marcos Nava: Yeah. This is Marcos. Keep in mind also that you have two other people that are able to help you. And that's the district executive and the district commissioner. You should include those two people whenever you have those types of concerns.

And they would be more than glad to - to help you and guide you in the right direction.

Barbara Powers: Right.

Carl Atkinson: Yes. Thank you.

Marcos Nava: Hi. Who - could we - a couple of people just joined us. Can you identify yourself? Okay. We had like two people join us. If you want to identify yourself you're more than welcome at this point. Okay. We will continue then. Thank you.

Barbara Powers: Okay. Thank you. All right. I did mention that I also serve as a unit commissioner. And I think that we've brought in that you need - that - that the unit commissioner meets with the charter organization rep, the unit leader and the committee chair.

It's important to have a unit commissioner. And if your unit does not have a unit commissioner that is something that you as the charter organization representative can try to pursue.

You can connect with the district because there's a district commissioner who should be assigning a unit commissioner to your unit. And it - it's very important that you have a strong unit commissioner there to help you. Okay.

Marcos Nava: We just had someone just join us. Can you identify yourself please? Okay Barbara.

Barbara Powers: Okay. I would like to address the issue regarding the people problem question that we did talk about just a few seconds ago. That is addressed in the guidebook on page 10. So 10 and 11, they have anticipated - the writers of this guidebook anticipated that.

So hopefully that will help to address some of those concerns.

Marcos Nava: Maybe you want to mention the district operations?

Barbara Powers: There is a chart on page 11 about the standard district operations, so you know how the whole thing fits together. Yes.

Marcos Nava: These are people that are there to support you. you belong to a district. You have a district executive. And that district executive has numerous volunteers - members of (unintelligible) - committee chairs of different committees that support Scouting in your particular area.

Barbara Powers: Okay. The other thing in the guidebook, in the last four minutes that we have here, that I'd like to touch on, the guidebook expresses that you are a voting member. Please remember that. You're a voting member of the district and the council. And it - the guidebook says this in several places.

So it's not just one. They want to be sure that you understand that. As a matter of fact, on page 14 of the guidebook it states that the council as a governing body, consists of members at large and one representative from each chartered organization.

The bylaws require that chartered organization representatives be in the majority. So you're very important as a charter organization representative. That's just how important council thinks you are, that the CORs need to be in the majority.

Another thing that I think this is - about this guidebook is it actually addresses how the charter concept started. So we began 1910, when the - when Boy Scouting began. So from the very beginning we started with the charter concept. And - and I think that's very important.

On page 17 of the guidebook it will tell you what the chartered organization agrees to, what the council agrees to. So you actually - you understand exactly what is going on.

It will tell you what should happen at the annual meeting that the executive has with that chartered organization, so that you know what to be prepared for. And it gives additional youth protection resources. Because that is something that BSA is very cognizant of.

We want to be sure that our youth are protected at all times. Okay. Are there anything - and we have two minutes. Are there any questions that you would have?

((Crosstalk))

Man: How do we get a guidebook?

Shayne Abrahams: You can go to [www.Legion.org/Scouting](http://www.Legion.org/Scouting). And it's located on our resources page. And you should have - when you signed up for the - today's conference, you should have received an email from me with all the conference materials.

Man: No, that didn't happen.

Man: Yeah. Mine either.

Kathy Nees: Barbara, this is Kathy from Department of Iowa.

Barbara Powers: Yes?

Kathy Nees: Can you tell me what happens when the council, the Boy Scout council does not listen to the voice of the chartering organization here, meaning an American Legion post? How do we step in at a state level to help solve that conflict between a council and a chartering organization?

Marcos Nava: I - I - I would - this is Marcos. I would suggest that you - you could contact the - the Legion and we have a great line of communications.

Kathy Nees: I am the Legion.

Marcos Nava: Okay. And then contact me. We can talk about the individual council. What is the - what is the - what's going on.

Barbara Powers: Right.

Marcos Nava: And then I will follow up with other people. Sometimes it takes a call from the national office to talk to the Scout Executive and hear what he or she is going through or understands about the problem. Many times they might not even be aware. Because remember, you have some layers.

You have - you have a unit; you have a district; and then you have the council. So I would suggest you do that. I am - I gave you - I gave my phone number earlier. Contact me. Let me know. And I will be more than glad to - to find out what's going on.

(Rich Jakes): Okay. Let me interject something here if I may.

Marcos Nava: Could you identify yourself please?

(Rich Jakes): Yes. This is (Rich Jakes) from South Carolina. Hello Marcos.

Marcos Nava: Hi.

(Rich Jakes): Hey. I just want to let you know that as of this year, there is a brand new position at the area level in the regions. And that position is the charter organizational relationship committee. Okay? I happen to be the committee chairman for Area 5 in Southern Region.

It is their task to provide that link and those liaisons between the organizations and BSA. So that's another resource you guys can write down and utilize.

Kathy Nees: Would you be able to share that information with Shayne so that he could give it out to the other departments, sir?

(Rich Jakes): I certainly will.

Kathy Nees: Great. Thank you.

(Rich Jakes): Let me write a note down for that.

((Crosstalk))

(Rich Jakes): ...that's a new position this year.

Kathy Nees: Yeah. We've never heard of the COR relationship committee. But that would be certainly something that we would look at in Iowa.

Marcos Nava: Very good. Anything else?

Wayne Newland: Yeah. This is Wayne Newland in Florida. COR has to sign the applications. What is our liability when we sign that - an application of somebody we've never even met much less had an opportunity to get to know them?

Marcos Nava: The - the thing - the thing that happens here - you get an adult that signs an adult application. You're not alone. You have other people in your - in the unit committee are part of this process. They - they pay - you - you do your best as far as interviewing the person.

The person is involved; has a child in the program. He fills - he or she fills out the application. And then we actually have a company that does the background check. And the background check is a tool to help us find out that - that it - the person has no issues.

If there is a problem the problem comes up and then we will contact the - the - the leadership of the unit and let them know that there's an issue. And sometimes it just might be for clarification. Sometimes it might be something other. And then at that point the Scout Executive, the council gets involved.

So you - you are taking care of by following the process that I mentioned, and by doing this we - we try to prevent anymore serious things happening.

Wayne Newland: Of course. So we understand that. But I just wanted to know if the COR - when he signs that he knows, approves and so forth, you think they'd be held liable somewhere along the way.

Kathy Nees: I have a very quick question for you, sir. Marcos, and this may be more for Shayne. Shayne, on the American Legion side, I know we've already got the background check required for our (unintelligible) and our baseball program. Is this something that we're going to add to Boy Scouting?

Or are we going to continue to allow the Boy Scouts to do those background checks and have us take their work order? Is that something that's going to be mandatory eventually?

Shayne Abrahams: No. I don't see that in the foreseeable future. Unlike, you know, those programs are national programs where we involve our staff and resources.

Kathy Nees: Correct.

Shayne Abrahams: But with the Scouting it's on the ground in your own background. So yeah, I don't - I don't think that will - will take place. So - and - and the Boy Scouts, they do a very good job of - of youth protection and - and those things.

Now that's not to say that your department can't take out additional coverages.

((Crosstalk))

Kathy Nees: ...events and stuff. I understand that. And that's not the problem. I'm just wondering that youth (unintelligible) that we utilize for those other two programs...

Shayne Abrahams: Yeah, that's...

Kathy Nees: ...is that something that you would recommend us to do? Or - or do we just automatically assume that the Boy Scouts has taken care of the leadership and we don't have to worry - a part of it?

((Crosstalk))



Man: I think that - I think that's over burdensome. The Boy Scouts do an excellent job of doing the background check.

Kathy Nees: Okay.

Shayne Abrahams: I agree.

Man: So questioner's question was is there a liability on the local level? Well...

Shayne Abrahams: Right.

Man: ...if you're getting together and meeting with the individual and getting a sense, you're signing the application that then prompts the background check.

And if there's a problem with a background check at the national level, you're going to find out about it and you're going to invite the person not to participate in the program. It's real...

Kathy Nees: Okay.

Man: ...simple. I - I don't see that there's a problem.

Kathy Nees: Okay.

Marcos Nava: Just additional information here on the guide that we're talking about, the Charter Organization Representative Guidebook. On page 23, the annual charter agreement between the organization and the Boy Scouts.

And the local council states the last bullet point, it has provide primary general liability insurance, to cover this charter organization, is board officers, COR employees and Scouting members and volunteers for authorized Scouting activities.

Indemnify the charter organization in accordance with the resolutions or the policies of the National Executive Board and the Boy Scouts of America. So it's - it's well written and it's upfront. And this is something that you sign as you have a new unit and as you renew the unit on a yearly basis.

Barbara Powers: Right.

Man: Exactly right.

Barbara Powers: And I would also like to add, this is Barbara, that - and this is also addressed in your guidebook. If there's anybody that you question that you don't feel comfortable signing for on the application, you do not have to do that. Nobody - as the material says, you don't have a right to be a Scout leader.

So you as the COR, need to - need to be proactive. And if you feel that this is not the right person, you do not have to sign. And the guidebook does address that. It's - as a matter of fact, I believe it says that you have the right to fire. So if you feel somebody's not appropriate, that is your prerogative.

Marcos Nava: And most important, make sure you do contact the people at your local level.

Barbara Powers: Yes.

Marcos Nava: The district executive...

Barbara Powers: Involve them.

Marcos Nava: ...and then the district commissioner...

((Crosstalk))

Marcos Nava: ...a council that - that's there to support you locally. Okay? Great. Thank you so much.

Kathy Nees: Okay, so - so if we want - if we wanted to know about the background - if I had a unit call me or an American Legion post call me and say that they were a chartering organization for the Boy Scout troop in their community, and they give me that name, I can call the Boy Scout council and find out if a background check has been run on that individual for them?

Man: Yes.

Kathy Nees: How do they know whether a background check has been done?

Marcos Nava: They are done automatically.

Barbara Powers: Right.

Marcos Nava: When - when the person fills out an application that's why it's important that everyone that's involved directly working with the youth that they fill out an application. And then they pay the registration fee and then automatically that person's background is - is checked.

Kathy Nees: By the Boy Scouts?

Marcos Nava: By the Boy Scouts. Yes.

Kathy Nees: Okay.

Marcos Nava: A company hired by the Boy Scouts. Yes.

Kathy Nees: Okay.

Barbara Powers: Yes.

Marcos Nava: Okay?

Shayne Abrahams: Okay.

Marcos Nava: Very good.

Shayne Abrahams: All right, great. I want to thank Barbara for that information and - as well as Marcos. And towards the end of the conference call we can also circle back if you have any additional comments or questions on that. We want to go ahead and give Mr. (Duncan) an opportunity to - to speak.

And Mr. (John Duncan) serves as the chairman on the experience taskforce for the Boy Scouts of America. But before I turn it over to Mr. (Duncan), I just want to read a letter that I received from him. It basically says Shayne, thank you so much for meeting with me on June 18th.

In each of our merit badge pamphlets we will include a list of other resources that Scouts and leaders may use relevant to the area of each particular merit badge. And in the next printing we would be pleased to include in this section

of the American Legion for public speaking and rifle shooting merit badges;  
so on and so forth.

Long story short, we're fortunate enough this year, to be listed as a resource  
for public speaking and rifle shooting merit badges.

So having said that, I would like to introduce Mr. (John Duncan), again the  
chairman of experience taskforce for the Boy Scouts of America, to talk a  
little bit about that process and to give us some background on that. Mr.  
(Duncan).

Marcos Nava: (John)? This is Marcos, (John). Before you start, has anyone new joined us?  
And the reason...

Michael Surbaugh: Yeah. This is - this is Mike Surbaugh. I've been listening in.

Marcos Nava: Oh.

Barbara Powers: Oh, great.

Marcos Nava: Chief? Great. Thank you for joining us. The - we have on a conference call,  
the majority of the department heads for the American Legion. And they are  
anxiously waiting to hear your greeting sir. I earlier read your bio and they're  
- they're waiting so that we know that you have busy schedule.

You're in Washington, DC and you allowed some time to greet this group and  
we welcome your comments right now. And after your comments I know that  
you will probably go back to your other duties in Washington DC. And we  
thank you for that sir. You have the floor.

Michael Surbaugh: Well thank you Marcos. And I certainly appreciate the leadership of everybody that's joined the call today. We are having our Boy Scout Sustainability Summit going on here in Washington. And we have councils throughout the country that are participating by webinar.

And it's been really a fun day of sharing the concepts of - of how we as Boy Scouts, have always cared about our planet and our impact and everything from the way that we go camping to the way that we promoted over the decades, recycling efforts.

And I think that some of the things that we're trying now very hard to get across to the community at large is that things that might be a current term like sustainability, you know, the Boy Scouts we've always had that - that care for others and that service to the community, as part of our core principles.

And the partnership that we've had with the Legion has been inspiring for me personally. The - the very first Boy Scout troop that I organized as a new professional, was with an American Legion post.

Just developed some great friends out of that that I kept in contact with throughout - throughout my whole career.

And seeing the impact that that had for young people and the number of Eagle Scouts that went through that troop, and what they in turn did for the community, just spoke to what American Legion really had as a commitment to the community at large and most of all, the kids.

And Marcos was sharing with me some numbers that I did not realize. I knew that the American Legion had always been and continues to be, number one with our civic organizations here. You're our largest charter partner.

I did not know that we had 2422 individual Cub Scout packs, Boy Scout troops and some venturing crews with 59,000 plus young people involved. If you had to asked me I probably would have guessed, we had about 1000 or 1500. I mean that number was just stunning to me.

And it - it is just a huge commitment that we need to have to you, to be of continued service.

Earlier, when I was listening to some of the comments and sometimes when we have disconnects with our local councils and challenges in making sure the administration of our packs and troops goes smoothly, and you have a way to, you know, resolve problems as they occur.

You know, anything that comes out of that, I certainly am very interested in hearing, because it's important for us to - to know that you - you can't serve kids in the Legion if we don't make it easy for you.

And that's what our commitment used to be to you, is that we will take your time, respect it and find ways that if we have problems we can resolve them very quickly. So most of all, I just wanted to say I'm honored and so appreciative of your involvement with us.

And that is a partnership that's gone back for a very, very long period of time. You know, before too long, we will be celebrating our 100th anniversary together, in 2019. And to have two great organizations do something together for 100 years, in today's world is so infrequent, rare.

And it's something that we treasure an honor. So thank you for what you're doing. And I - if there's anything I can do for you or if you have any questions or you have something for me that you'd like me to know, I'd be happy to take any questions or - or respond to anything that - that might be on your agenda.

Kathy Nees: Thank you for being with us today, sir.

Michael Surbaugh: Well thank you. And - and thank you again. I'm going to continue to listen in, because this is a topic that I'm very interested in.

And Marcos, I'll ask if you do me a favor - if there's anything following, when I leave the call, if there's anything that, you know, we can do to be of better service to the legion, you know, please let me know. And I would be happy to respond.

So again, thank you - thank you all so much. I appreciate it.

Marcos Nava: I will do that Chief.

Shayne Abrahams: All right. Thank you. And again, we thank you so much for joining us. As I said earlier, we'd like to hear from (John Duncan) now, to talk about the merit badge training, rifle shooting and public speaking.

(John Duncan): Good afternoon. Is my audio coming through okay?

Shayne Abrahams: Yep. Loud and clear.



(John Duncan): Very good. So - so first and foremost, I do want to thank you all for your service to our country. I know that in this day and age it has become routine to say something like that to anyone who's currently serving or to any veteran to the point that I get concerned that it starts to lose some sincerity.

Like asking how are you but then not really listening to the answer. So it's part of introducing who I am. I want you to know these things about me.

I am the son of a Vietnam veteran who today at 70 years old, is not only a life member of the American Legion but also a member of the Local Honor Guard, who attends to the final arrangements, as we lay our veterans to rest.

And I am the brother of a civilian employee of the Department of Defense who is, at this very moment, attached to and deployed with a military unit in an undisclosed location, carrying out the work of National Defense that we're all much more comfortable just not knowing about.

And I am the brother in law of one of our first combat casualties in Afghanistan, Corporal (Matthew Commons) who was killed in action by enemy fire on the 4th of March 2002, in the Battle of (Unintelligible).

So I have a uniquely personal and profound appreciation for the blank check that each one of our veterans wrote to the citizens of this great nation. And I thank you, each and every one of you, for your service.

My name is (John Duncan) and I am a volunteer with the Boy Scouts of America. I do have a day job with a company called Nielsen, who many of you are familiar with through the Nielsen ratings. We'll, among other things, track how many of you watch the World Series Game 1 tonight.

But we also track a fair amount of marketing insight as to how many will have a beer or two with the game. If it's from a can or a bottle, whether - where it was purchased. And what sort of snack food was bought with it to munch on. So in short, I work for Big Brother when it comes to marketing data.

But in my free time, what little of it there is, I am a volunteer for the Boy Scouts of America doing what I can to help young people to be prepared for life.

Because I do work in marketing data, I know that among those in our military service today and among our veterans especially, a large percentage of you had some experience as a youth, in scouting. The American Legion and the Boy Scouts of America, have been partners since 1919.

And because of this strong relationship and because so many of you were Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts and Explorers or today, Venturers, today the American Legion continues as has been mentioned a couple of times, to recognize the value of Scouting and the benefits to society of making Scouting available to young people.

As of our most recent published data, the American Legion and Auxiliary is the single largest non-faith based chartering organization with the numbers of units and youth that the Chief mentioned just a few moments ago. But the truth is that really only scratches the surface.

And that doesn't even count the youth who are in units chartered to some other organization but are supported faithfully by members of the Legion and Auxiliary, serving as leaders in those other units.

So I want to thank you all again for your membership and support of the American Legion's mission as the nation's largest wartime veteran service organization, committed to mentoring youth and sponsorship of wholesome programs in our communities, advocating patriotism and honor.

So my topic on our agenda this afternoon, is on merit badges. And because many of you were Scouts many of you may already be familiar to some extent, with merit badges, offered by the Boy Scouts of America.

Many of you may have even earned merit badges in your youth, when you were Boy Scouts - five or ten or perhaps, for a couple of you, just a few more years ago than that.

Today the Boy Scouts of America offers merit badges in some 136 unique areas, more than we possibly have time today to even list off on the call. So I'm just going to hit a few.

But each merit badge is focused on a particular area, ranging from classic Scout skills like wilderness survival or (unintelligible), to necessary life skills such as public speaking or citizenship. There are many focused on a (concept) - on ecology and conservation, such as insect study or sustainability.

There's a conference going on in Washington just now. And some great lifelong hobbies and skill development items such as scuba diving or rifle shooting. The purpose of the merit badge program today, is very much the same as it was back in the beginning of Scouting.

We want to help Scouts - young boys between the ages of 11 and 17, to identify and to develop a particular area of interest. Something that they take

with them as they grow up out of Scouting, to be men. Skills that they may use in their hobbies or even in their professions, in their lives.

With that purpose in mind, there are certain merit badges that are required for a young man to earn our highest rank of Eagle Scout, as we believe that in order to be the best kind of (unintelligible), every person should develop and maintain an interest in those areas.

And so those would include things like First Aid and cooking, citizenship in the community, in the nation and in the world. Required merit badges also include personal management - the ability to handle money responsibly and someday run their home according to their budget.

And family life - the ability to run a household such that family members understand their responsibility and help to make the home a livable and enjoyable place. Of the 21 merit badges that are required to become an Eagle Scout, 13 are taken from a required list.

And I suspect that if we look down that required list, the rest that I didn't already mention - I think all of us would probably agree that our society would be a much better place if every citizen had earned these required merit badges.

But beyond these required merit badges are a broad spectrum of elective merit badges, each offered with the intent that young Scouts would identify and complete those badges that are of interest and relevance to their own life.

Topics range from computer programming to (fine) mechanics, to bird study to graphic arts, Indian lore, fly fishing.

We are as an organization, constantly looking at how to add more and more areas that young people are interested in and may be relevant to their lives, so that they can contribute - so that that can contribute to their growth as functional members of our society.

In creating each of those merit badges, the Boy Scouts of America creates requirements that each Scout must individually complete in order to earn that badge.

And we work with a multitude of other experts and organizations, to identify areas of expertise and resources that Scouts might be able to use in fulfilling those requirements.

In the case of rifle shooting and public speaking merit badges, Boy Scouts of America is proud to count the American Legion as one of our partners on this.

The American Legion's oratorical contest was an ideal opportunity to exercise some of the skills that a young Scout would learn in public speaking merit badge, while simultaneously fulfilling one of the requirements that reads, collect and organize information about the topic and prepare an outline.

Write an eight to ten minute speech, practice it and then deliver it. And what better topic than some of the finer points of our Constitution?

In a very similar way, the American Legion's Junior Shooting Sports Program and the Boy Scouts' rifle shooting merit badge pursues similar goals and offer the opportunity to leverage skills across activities and organizations.

The Boy Scouts of America will be proud to include these opportunities from the Legion, as resources that a Boy Scout can use in working towards the requirements for those two merit badges and exercising what he learned.

And we look forward to a long and continued relationship in which we explore further opportunities for partnership where our two organizations have commonality on purpose and resources that each supports the other one.

But as great as that relationship is there's an important component that I haven't really touched on yet. And that's the delivery of those merit badges. And so now I want to talk about what you personally can do and what you can encourage every other member of the American Legion to do as well.

Merit badges are earned by a small group of boys working with merit badge counselors, someone who has a particular passion and expertise in the - that merit badge, someone who can inspire young men aged 11 and 17 so that they not only fulfill the requirements and earn the merit badge but possibly take away a lifelong interest.

And I can personally guarantee that out of 136 merit badges that we currently offer every single person on this call is an expert and has the passion to be a counselor in at least one of them and realistically probably a good handful.

So I want to give you two tools. The first one is where you can find a list of all of those 136 merit badges because I've only listed about a dozen.

At [scouting.org](http://scouting.org), [scouting.org/merit badges](http://scouting.org/merit%20badges) you will find not only the current list but if you click on any one of those merit badges you'll get a list of the current requirements so that you can see exactly what is being asked of each

young man and make sure that you're familiar with and able to help him through that process.

The second resource is where to sign up. Merit badge counselors are each registered through the Oracle counsel. And fair amounts have already been said about the registration process.

But finding that local counsel some of you may already know your local scouting folks and know exactly where to sign up. But for anyone of you or any other legionnaire who you speak to who doesn't know if you go to our Web site at beascout all one word, beascout.org at the top there's a link that says Become a Volunteer.

And if you enter there your ZIP Code it will come back with a contact address and phone number of the local counsel where that person lives.

Contact them and let them know that you would like to be a merit badge counselor and they will work with you according to their local registration procedures to get you - get your information into the system and available to scouts in that area.

There is training to be a merit badge counselor but it's quite minimal, quite simple. And it comes in two parts.

The first part is required for all volunteer scouting positions who I've already mentioned we call Youth Protection Training.

(Barbara) already mentioned this. And true to its name this course is all about protecting our youth and addresses how to protect yourself as well from ever

being in a situation that might have any doubt, even the slightest hint of impropriety.

You'll never work one on one with a youth. And they'll tell you how to stay out of those situations. In scouting we employ the budding system and scouts rule they'll be at least two of them. And we encourage you as well as adults because you'll have friends who have similar interests to operate similarly using the principle of (QD)s leadership.

This training can be completed online and it usually takes about 45 minutes. It's also offered in person around the country and with your local counsel will help you find a convenient time and location.

Second training is specific to the position of being a merit badge counselor. And it's just about a short, about an hour and offers you a variety of resources and an overview of what it means to be a merit badge counselor or where to turn for help, what resources are available to you and how to separate what's official from the Boy Scouts of America from the vast array of other things out there on the Internet that sort of claim to be official but they're not.

The time commitment to be a merit badge counselor is highly variable but generally is quite low unless you go out of your way to make it otherwise.

The process is intentionally is - excuse me, is intended to be driven by the scouts, not you as a counselor.

Meeting times will be negotiated by you and the scouts and therefore according to your own schedule availability. And you are always within your rights to say no if you start to get overwhelmed for requests that exceed your willingness to volunteer.



This is a free registration, one of the few free registrations in the Boy Scouts of America.

The time commitment is a completely within your hands. And the subject matter is only ever going to be on merit badges that you've specifically identified. So what could possibly be better?

I'm reminded of the words of (Forest Woodcraft) in 1950, words that today are widely used and abused, often misquoted and misattributed but find their true roots in scouting.

He wrote as part of an essay 100 years from now it will not matter what my bank account was, the sort of house I lived in or the kind of car I drove. But the world may be different because I was important in the life of a boy.

Being a merit badge counselor is your chance and the chance for every member of the Legion to make that difference, to bring your passion and your energy and your expertise to bear in a way that directly interacts with youth and inspires a young man and may change his life forever.

I want to thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today and at this time open the floor to questions on the merit badge program or anything else to do with scouting.

And I'll say at the outset that if I don't get to any questions or there's anything lingering please feel free to call (Marcus). And he pretty well knows where to find me at any hour of the day or night.

(Larry Whitmeyer): And (John). (John), (Larry Whitmeyer) from Oregon.

(John Duncan): Hi (Larry).

(Larry Whitmeyer): I think it's important to emphasize to prospective merit badge counselors when they look at the requirements they need to be very zealous. They are not to add or detract from those requirements.

(John Duncan): That is absolutely the case. The requirements are the requirements. And no one including me and even (Mike) the chief who spoke just before me is able to modify those requirements.

So while we want to inspire youth and get them excited we cannot use modified requirements by adding or subtracting or changing in any way.

And that is actually the primary points of the training offered to merit badge counselors.

Rick Pond: Hey (John)? (John)?

(John Duncan): Yes?

Rick Pond: This is Rick Pond from New Hampshire.

(John Duncan): Yes?

Rick Pond: I want to thank you for your father's service and are you a member of the Sons of the American Legion?

(John Duncan): Not yet.

Rick Pond: Did I say that right?

Woman: Yes. Wow.

(John Duncan): I said somebody just got an action item to send me a brochure and an application.

Woman: Yes I'm sure.

(John Duncan): They did.

Rick Pond: And welcome to the Sons of the American Legion.

(John Duncan): Thank you.

Man: Hey (John) could you talk just a little bit about the - since we're listed as a resource will those - in real-time what does that look like? What can these folks expect to take place now?

(John Duncan): So the resources section in for each one of our 136 merit badges we've published a pamphlet of about 40 or 50 or 60 pages. They vary a little bit depending on the complexity of the topic and the amount of material that is out there.

But in every one of those pamphlets there is a section that refers scouts to other useful resources that you may find useful in terms of further exploration on the topic and/or ways to meet some of the requirements.

And so for example if we take public speaking we will list the American Legion's oratorical contest as an obvious way to fulfill one of the requirements specifically for that merit badge.

Woman: Awesome.

(John Duncan): It will be difficult to quantify exactly what to expect from listing any one resource in that section. On any given day somebody may or may not choose to use that particular resource off the list of resources available on the merit badge. So I'm not quite sure I could put a number to it.

Shayne Abrahams: Yes that's great. Now I think, you know, there's common denominators with all of our program. But the strongest one is definitely scouting. So this just again just reinforces our commitment to scouting and the tie in that it has with all of our other programs.

Are there any questions for (John)?

Wayne Newland: Yes this is Wayne Newland with the Department of Arizona.

(John Duncan): Hello.

Wayne Newland: Hello. I have a small question are - about the National Agent Scout of the Year Award. As to venturing now that young ladies are in the venturing program are they eligible since they are - if they've received the Summit Award for the American Legion Eagle Scout of the Year Award?

Shayne Abrahams: Actually I'm going to ask...

((Crosstalk))

Shayne Abrahams: ...let's table that conversation or that question till I get my report. Is that okay?

Wayne Newland: Okay thank you.

Shayne Abrahams: Okay great. Any other questions?

Wayne Newland: And I'll just say that that is a program that is only administrated by the American Legion and not the Boy Scouts of America so...

(John Duncan): There you go. I don't know.

Shayne Abrahams: Thank you. Any other questions for (John) regarding merit badges?

Jim Davidson: This is Jim Davidson with the Department of Washington. Is there now an online training resource for merit badge counselors?

Woman: You mentioned that.

(John Duncan): At the present time the Youth Protection is available online but the merit badge counselor training unless something has changed in the last two days is not yet. I believe...

Jim Davidson: No I for my local scouting district I do that training. But I had to develop is on my own because there were basically no resources available specific for merit badge counselor training. So that's really something that I think BSA needs to address. And if they could put it online it would be great.

Woman: (Unintelligible).

(John Duncan): I would welcome a copy of what you have prepared and probably an imposition to help use that as a basis for creating a more robust national - national curriculum for that.

Elwin Spray: (John) this is Elwin Spray. I'm familiar with a training, well I guess it's a CD. I think it's only about a 20 minute 30 minute CD that the training people have so the local council training chairs have. But in any case I'll see if I can get you a copy of that also.

(John Duncan): I would be interested. I would so suspect that may have been developed as part of some local council's response to that need. But again I would certainly welcome a copy of that in order to make that a more robust national offering.

Rick Pond: Yes this is Richard Pond again from New Hampshire. And I'm looking at the national Web site right now. And there is information, there's a Guide to Merit Badge counselors PDF. So there is some information there plus merit badge resources.

Elwin Spray: Yes. That's just a pamphlet though. It - that's all that is. And that's what I ended up taking my - using to develop the training that I did.

So it - it would be nice if there was something a little bit more robust because most people quite frankly aren't going to bother to read a pamphlet.

(John Duncan): Exactly right. And we want the material to be available but we have been in the process over the last many years of making more and more of our training available online as an interactive course, skills checks and knowledge checks and so forth to ensure that leaders are actually getting the material as opposed just dumping a PDF on your hard drive and walking way.

Man: Right.

Jim Davidson: This is Jim Davidson with the Department of Washington again.

Need to remind people when they sign up as a merit badge counselor they have to reregister every year. And that means filling out the darn form every year which is a real pain in the neck. I wish the BSA would do away with that requirement.

(John Duncan): Increasingly councils are turning towards a streamlined renewal process for merit badge counselors.

I know in my home council here rather than filling out the adults application every year I receive a card that requires me to check here and check here.

It does require that my youth protection training is always up to date within the last two years. That's a part of requirements but then sign here saying I still wish to be a merit badge counselor for the designated merit badges that I've previously been approved for and that's all it takes.

Shayne Abrahams: No, that would be great if they could make that a national thing because a lot of councils just aren't going to do that.

(John Duncan): I can also tell you that our national organization is increasingly focused on moving towards an electronic registration. The paper carbonless triplicate forms aren't dead yet but they are definitely 1980s technology. And so I'm looking for a way to guide us away from those as fast as possible.

Man: Hallelujah.

(John Duncan): Okay.

Shayne Abrahams: Okay, anything else for (John)?

(Barbara Power): This is (Barbara Powers). And I just wanted to add that (John) mentioned that merit badges can help develop an area of interest.

So I wanted to mention that when my son was working on I believe it was the personal management merit badge he was to go meet with the banker or somebody else that did that type of financial work, professionally.

So I drove him go meet with the merit - with the banker. And when he gets back in the car he says, you know, I think I could see myself doing that.

And so he went - when he went to college he got a degree in finance. He has his MBA in finance and that's what he's doing, so BSA helped my son to find his job interest so thank you merit badge counselors.

(John Duncan): You can't see my smile but it's as big as it gets.

Shayne Abrahams: Well (John) I want to thank you again for giving us your time and expertise. And your passion is definitely contagious. So we appreciate you. And if there's anything that my - that we can do, American Legion around in my office by all means just give me an email or a call.

So thank you again for your time (John).

(John Duncan): Absolutely, thank you. And whoever's close to him sign him up to the sons.



Shayne Abrahams: Okay. Now let's move on to Mr. Elwin Spray who's going to talk to us about the BSA adult membership standards.

Elwin Spray: So (John) and (Barbara) got to do the fun things. Now let's kind of go back and talk about some of the stuff that we're not having so much fun with.

But basically the idea is that - and this is a quote now. We're talking about and leadership standards.

And the quote is that, "No adult applicant for registration as an employee or a non-unit serving volunteer who otherwise meets the requirements of the Boy Scouts of America may be denied registration on the basis of sexual orientation".

Now the idea is basically that we as - and maybe I should back up a little bit at kind of talk about who (Barbara) and I are at least.

We are volunteers who come from organizations that are like Shayne and all the rest to you guys are - and ladies are really organizations that are civic in nature.

We have other aspects of ourselves that we're also church people. We're also - have our own other organizations that we're members of.

But here what we are is we're representing our civic organizations. Barbara's representing the Kiwanis and I'm representing the Sons of the American Revolution which is an organization similar to the Sons of the American or the - excuse me, the Sons of the American Legion.

But as people representing organizations we're - we look at and we kind of take volunteers as they come to us. And we want to train those people who to come to us. We want to give them the training that requires them to be - to deliver them the best that they can be for the youth that are being entrusted in their care.

Part of that training then is the youth protection training. So we take what comes to us. Before we do that exactly what we've been talking about from - with (Barbara) is we do an evaluation of whether or not these are good guys and ladies to be working in our program. But we take the people that come to us.

Now the religious organizations who are also sponsors for units they have a little bit different aspect. They want people when they come in to ascribe to their particular faith and be at least looking at their faith and trying to bring themselves up to that level.

We're not with that. We're working with people who want to work with youth. And that's our basic organization - that's our basic level of introduction.

So we have then to do a basic valuation of who these people are and then we train them. We train them through the youth protection training.

And I really appreciate something that (John) mentioned that's extremely important when you think about the Youth Protection Program. Not only is it about the youth and the protection about the youth but it's also the protection for the adults themselves.

So you as an adult are trained that it is not appropriate for you to be in a one-on-one relationship with the youth.

It should be a - there should be either an open door always in whenever you are or there should be a buddy system. And those are very important aspects and they allow for yourselves as adults to be protected.

So this is something else to make sure that you mention when you talk to adult volunteers that this Youth Protection Program is very important.

The Youth Protection Program is done every two years. And that gets to be kind of a pain sometimes.

But because a lot of our computers now are set up to remind us that your program or your protection certification is going to expire in 90 days or and you start getting those kind of little notices. And so that kind of gets to be kind of a challenge sometimes. You try to figure out ways to opt out of that.

But it's important to remember that that's the protection is not just for the youth but the protection is for yourselves.

So that's something to remember about Youth Protection Program and is something to mention.

The idea of the Adult Leadership Standards Program - and I have to assume that most everybody on the call is probably, has a general scouting background so you kind of know what we're talking about. But I'll go back a little bit.

The National Executive Lord of the Boy Scouts of America changed their position. They changed it in a - in this resolution with the language that I just mentioned that removed the national restriction on openly gay adult leaders and employees.

And that resolution was effective immediately on when it was adopted at the end of July. So that was two months ago, three months ago.

Chartered organizations continue to select their adult leaders, exactly what (Barbara) said.

Religious chartered organizations may continue to use religious beliefs as criteria for selecting adult leaders including matters of sexuality.

Scouting members and parents may continue to select local units chartered to organizations with similar beliefs that best meet the needs of their families.

The youth membership policy adopted in 2013 is not affected by this resolution and remain unchanged.

The ideals and principles and duty to God as a Scout is a reverent set forth and the scout oath and law remains central to scouting.

So what this means scouting is not and it is never been an appropriate environment to discuss sexual conduct.

While there's no national or local counsel restriction on openly gay adults serving as leaders or employees everyone agrees to follow national policies and complies with BSA's behavioral standards.

For youth scouting is a youth program. No youth may be denied membership in the Boy Scouts on the basis of sexual orientation.

For families parents can select units, charter organizations with similar beliefs the best means, the best thing that meets the needs of their families.

For adult leaders, the adult unit leaders may apply for positions in units chartered to organizations with similar beliefs. At the district level or above there is no restriction on openly gay adults serving as leaders.

For chartered organizations they will continue to select adult leaders. And religious chartered organizations may use religious beliefs as criteria for selecting adult leaders.

So this is really the basic - the basics of all the discussions that have gone on.

Now there's been a lot of - there's a lot of different - people hear half the story, people hear other half the story.

For us as again as organizations that are used to working in the civic arena we generally don't have - we don't have an issue as a general rule with this kind of statement.

As coming from our own faith-based backgrounds we perhaps do have. But then we're putting - we need to remember which hat we're wearing at which time.

And of course it's difficult separate those out. But the bottom line in all of that is that we just have a situation where the youth protection training, the youth

protection kicks in, in all situations and sexual orientation or sexual activity is not allowed in scouting period.

So no matter where that is that's where we - that's where we're at.

And this is been a position for scouting for 100 years or 100 plus years is that we're there to protect the boys, the youth. The youth are in the program. And that's the bottom line of where we are.

So what I like to do is kind of ask is there some questions that I can kind of go over? I'm not sure how much of this - we have a lot of detail we can get into but let me ask who's got some questions?

Shayne Abrahams: Elwin?

(Rich Jurick): Elwin this is (Rich Jurick) from South Carolina. Before you get off the call how about give us your contact information?

Elwin Spray: Sure.

(Rich Jurick): I particularly need that.

Elwin Spray: Okay sure. I'm a volunteer and probably the easiest way to do this is just to ask Shayne and go ahead and forward all that. That's - that would be the easiest way.

Jim Stewart: Elwin this is Jim Stewart.

Elwin Spray: All right...

((Crosstalk))

Jim Stewart: Elwin this is Jim Stewart.

Elwin this is Jim Stewart from the Department of Nevada.

Elwin Spray: Yes Jim?

Jim Stewart: Right now I'm sitting here at the National Headquarters for the American Legion going through the American Legion College.

Now I've been doing my best to toot our horn about scouting and the relationship we have with the American Legion. But just with the participants here I actually had a number of push backs about this resolution. Of course it's just recent.

But Boy Scouts of America really needs to get the word out better to all the different organizations on how this resolution is affecting them. And we're just not getting out there that the misinformation is rampant. We need to get better information out there.

Elwin Spray: Okay thank you. I will absolutely pass that on. And I think that part of it always is whenever there's general media interest in a story it's always well what is the - what is the chaos, what is the crisis? What is the terrible 200 mile an hour hurricane that was going to strike Mexico and then cause major havoc throughout everywhere?

You know, it - it hits, the landfall hits and all of a sudden it's a nonstory.

(Marcus): This is (Marcus). I just want to share with everyone that prior - immediately after the membership standards, adult membership standards went into effect we contacted our charter partners organizations and we had a conversation with each of them. And it was a very open discussion bringing people up to date and giving their thoughts. And I think that they're cleared on - and where what it is.

And I, you know, Jim if there's some confusion if you know of anyone in particular let me know and I would be more than glad to follow-up.

Jim Stewart: Well (Marcus)...

(Marcus): And we of three teams here. We have the religious group, we have the educational group and the civic organization. And I'm sure that I can divvy up the...

Jim Stewart: Well...

(Marcus): ...with our team members here.

Jim Stewart: Yes (Marcus) and it's not so much that the - we've been talking to the leadership of these organizations. We haven't really disseminated that information down to their subordinates. And I think that's where we need to share the information more and getting it down to those lower subordinate units.

((Crosstalk))



Elwin Spray: Well Elwin again. This is Elwin. I think that what we've really said in all of this is that there - for everything that we do there is no change as there's the three - well there's three sections. This is what (Marcus) is referring to.

In the organizational sponsorship there's religious sponsorship and our own chartered organization sponsorship and then there's educational one.

But for the educational one and for the - our own chartered organizations or civic organizations we really - there's really no change. Everything is pretty much the same.

It's the religious organizations that are - that have expressed concerns in different way. And again gets back to the chartered organization, excuse me, or our chartered organization manual that (Barbara) just talked about it is really up to the chartered organization representative on behalf of the institutional head who is signing off on the people who are coming in.

And as long as people who are coming in are not misusing the bully pulpit of scouting to do something other than what scouting is -- and scouting is a youth program where sexuality is not involved -- then it's that level of protection.

So again chartered organization representative is an extremely important and critical position in all of these - in all of this discussion.

Jim Stewart: I agree. And...

Kathy Nees: Sorry, go ahead.

Jim Stewart: The post that I have in my but department I do share that information. And I do present it as there's no change.

But that's not what they hear out of the media. That's not what they - because it's the controversy with our religious organization that we have with Boy Scouts of America.

And but we need to better inform everybody. That's what I'm trying to get at, not that we have an issue is American Legion.

Elwin Spray: Right.

Jim Stewart: It's the communication to the lower units.

Elwin Spray: Well I certainly think that there's the opportunity for trying to reach out. And I will endeavor to see if there is no way that we can get that out.

Of course a big thing now is that units are in the process of re-chartering. So we'll also have an opportunity to see whether or not there is a kickback or push back.

One of the things that has been happening is that the people who are the leaders within the different councils have been told this is an opportunity for them to go out and to reconnect with all of the different institutional heads. So that's what they - I think when we talk about we've got to levels of institutional head.

One is of course is, you know, with Shayne and you guys as institutional heads but then also the actual unit people.

So the councils have been told that they need to be aware that aggressive contact needs to be made with the local units and the local unit institutional

heads so that though those guys have the opportunity then to have the conversation that, you know, that we're having right here then have that conversation.

So hopefully Jim that would solve it but I will pass it on that that's something we need to try to see if there some way we could make that story out there again.

And it needs to go out to commissioners and to the district, the unit serving district executives who are out there in the field right now.

Kathy Nees: Mr. Stewart, Kathy from Department of Iowa. You know, you talked about the merit badges and we've talk about all different kinds of things that go along in scouting.

Not one single time was there a mention that sexual orientation was a requirement to get one of these merit badges or to become an Eagle Scout.

So if our - if the leaders are not teaching that what are we talking about here? We're talking about 13, 14-year-olds, we weren't teaching them that to begin with. Why is it an issue now?

Elwin Spray: Well it's not - it's an issue now because it's been raised as Jim is alluding to by the - by media people. It's being brought up as an issue. And what we've said is that...

Shayne Abrahams: Elwin?

Elwin Spray: Yes?

Shayne Abrahams: If I could just have a second please.

Elwin Spray: Sure.

Shayne Abrahams: Lee Shaw the Director for National Alliances is here with us. And he would like to comment.

Elwin Spray: Sure, go.

Lee Shaw: Hello everyone. Thanks for joining in and thanks for allowing me to participate in the call as well.

I just wanted to briefly state because we understand the communication issue is very important.

And what we've tried to do from the national organization standpoint is strongly encourage all of our national charter organizations to communicate with their local chapters or their local districts or their local posts.

Because coming from the leadership of the organization it is much more effective than coming from the Boy Scout of America.

Because if I'm going to be a part of an organization and I'm not only used to but I expect to hear from the leadership of that particular organization in terms of the vision and where we're moving and where we're going forward then that is much more likely to be received in the manner in which it is distributed.

And so what we tried to do was to make sure that the leadership of all the organizations whether they're civic, community, faith-based or educational

that the leadership all has a clear and concise message of what the resolution really meant and they could then interpret and decipher just how that would affect their home organization.

And so in order for us to do that - and I agree we need to continue to make sure everyone gets the right message to truth of the message and not the mis-messages that are out there.

But we really strongly encourage the organizations to kind of put that out there for their own organization as opposed to us having a blanket this is what it means.

Because it means certain things to different people just depending on what their mission aims are for their organization.

I also want to commend the I think it was Kathy who just spoke. And you hit the nail on the head when you said what are we talking about.

And we can't bury our head in the sand but at the same time we know for sure everything that we're talking about moving forward is the way we want to operate and the way we have operated in the past in terms of leadership development for young people.

Man: Great. So thank you Lee. I think we're ready to move on if there are no other comments with Elwin. Elwin thank you so much for your participation.

And at this point we would go to Shayne who is going to take the next subject which is the Square Knot Award in (new line), everything pertaining to the American Legion Award. Shayne?

Shayne Abrahams: All right, thank you. Thank you.

(Dick Elwine): I had a question please.

Shayne Abrahams: Healthy discussion. Yes go ahead.

(Dick Elwine): Well my question is -- this is (Dick Elwine) from Montana. And I just want to understand what we've been - what you guys have been talking about. Is this a case by case basis back down to the - each charter organization?

Shayne Abrahams: Yes, that's exactly it. Those decisions are made on the local level. And depending on where you are in your own backyard you're a COR. Those decisions reside with you.

Jim Stewart: Shayne?

(Dick Elwine): Thank you.

Jim Stewart: Shayne this is Jim Stewart from Department of Nevada. Again this is the reason why I've been trying to have that national conversation about trying to get the scouting chairs together and have that communication down.

This is the reason why we need to have that committee to work on that.

So right now I'm still working with my ad hoc committee to try and work on that resolution and we're - because we need now really to get that down to our local levels.

Jim Davidson: This is Jim Davidson with the Department of Washington. Many of our posts have been kind of waiting for some sort of direction.

My advice which I got from our Scout executive is very simple. We follow the law.

Number two religious organizations or faith-based organizations do have protection in how they interpret this. But we as civic organizations do not. We have to follow the law. It's just as simple as that.

And then I've always held as a previous participant said issues of sexuality do not have a place in the Boy Scouts of America.

Shayne Abrahams: I appreciate it. Thank you for your comments.

Has anyone else joined us recently and on the call? Give you an opportunity to be recognized by (Michelle) for the record.

Okay if not having said that and again with these issues I'm available off-line. (Marcus) is available also to address these.

But again, you know, we strongly encourage that you folks deal with these own issues with your leadership Boy Scout representatives in your own backyard again. So thank you for that.

I've attached my report. It's also online if you care to take a look at it.

But I'll briefly just I'll hit some of the high points.

And with that in terms of what's going on with American Legion scouting a listening of the 2014 American Legion sponsored Boy Scout units within your department that information is online at [legion.org/scouting](http://legion.org/scouting).

In honor of past National Commander Frank N. Belgrano, Jr. we have an award that's awarded annually to the department that has rendered the most outstanding service during the periods July 31 through August 1 to the Boy Scouts of America.

Again, this year's win in 2015 was Department of California. And incidentally we only received two responses this year. So again I want to call the charge or charge all of our departments to take more activity or more - participate in this great award.

(Ethan Koppel) was from Nebraska was selected our 2015 American Legion Eagle Scout of the Year. He received a \$10,000 scholarship. Runners-up received a \$2500 scholarship, college scholarship.

(Michael Parker) from New York, (Jacob Kelly) from Wisconsin, (Braden Benedict) from California. We received 32 applications this year.

And the 2016 Nomination Form is online. It can be downloaded at [legion.org](http://legion.org) on the Scouting page.

The American Legion national headquarters staff continues to provide those that attained the rank of Eagle Scout and now C Scout quartermasters a Certificate of Appreciation signed by the national commander.

Those can be downloaded and completed and downloaded on [legion.org\scouting](http://legion.org/scouting).

So just go online, complete the form and print out the certificates with the national commander's signature.



Awarded by the American Legion National Headquarters' Square Knot is designed to recognize the American Legion, the American Legion Auxiliary or Sons of the American Legion members who actively - who are actively involved in scouting programs.

To date we've issued 15 Square Knots. For more information just visit the Web site.

For 59 days this summer three teenage Boy Scouts and a Vietnam Veteran rode their bikes across the entire country on a mission to provide comfort for a select and important few.

On August the 15 that mission came to a successful end as the crew of Bike Trip America arrived at 1 World Trade Center in New York City after starting June 18 in Oregon and peddling 3600 miles along the Canadian border to raise nearly \$20,000 for the Legions Operations Comfort Warrior -- great program.

If you're not aware of it a video and a great story can be found on our Scouting Web page as well.

Resolution 22 2015 out of the National Convention Department of Texas revised eligibility requirements for the American Legion Eagle Scout of the Year consolidated with Resolution 46 out of Washington. We consolidated them both since they both were similar.

The resolution calls for the American Legion to support the eligibility options for National Eagle Scout of the Year Award and scholarships to be modified to include being a son or a grandson of our Sons of the American Legion. This resolution was held for further study.

And lastly the American Legion scouting brochures -- I know you've heard this before -- will be available soon I promise you.

And lastly, again lastly please continue promoting the concept of scouting by urging American Legion Posts in your department to consider sponsoring more scouting units. Scouting continues to exemplify the true spirit of Americanism.

If there aren't any questions I'm...

(Karen): I have one for you Shayne. This is (Karen).

Shayne Abrahams: (Sure).

(Karen): You're probably tired of hearing from Iowa. First of all congratulations to California for winning the Belgrano Trophy.

Is a possible for the other departments maybe to see that application or to see what they are doing that we could steal some of their ideas? I'd be very interested in seeing what they did to earn that award.

Shayne Abrahams: Well, you know, it's - and nothing special. Basically if you look at the information that you need to submit you just submit scouting activity.

(Karen): Right.

Shayne Abrahams: And so the more scouting activity you have the better chances you are.

So if you do - would like - if you would like to take a look at the report I would encourage you to contact that department and see if they will be willing to share that information with you.

(Karen): No they're not. You know they're not.

Shayne Abrahams: Well you know it's - there's no creativity to it at all. I mean it's just it's for the most part it's just raw numbers.

So if you're doing something, you know, submit that information and we can have those folks at national convention take a look at it.

But I have no reason to believe that they wouldn't share that information with you so...

(Karen): Okay.

Shayne Abrahams: Yes. Have you reached out to them?

(Karen): No I have not. I just was curious as to what fun things they're doing in other departments. It would be very enlightening to the other departments I would think. Everybody wants to know what everybody else is up to.

Shayne Abrahams: Yes. The big portion of this - of the award submission is just some - just raw numbers and data.

But again I would encourage all of you if you're interested, you know, give the Department of California a call.

(Karen): Okay, will do.

Shayne Abrahams: Thanks.

(Larry Whitmeyer): (Larry Whitmeyer), Department of Oregon.

Two items, one I would like to say that the success with Bike Trip America would not have happened had it not been for all the American Legion Posts along their route who supported those young people. And we in Oregon are extremely proud.

Secondly I believe that we the American Legion should look at the annual Eagle Scout Award of the Year application and program and include that as non-gender specific.

We have qualified female quartermasters and (Seven) awards who could qualify for that award. We need to look at that program and get up to date. That's it.

Jim Davidson: This is Jim Davidson with the Department of Washington, just a comment on the online Eagle Scout recognition.

It has last year's commander's signature on it as of last Friday when I downloaded it for a boy. So that needs to be updated on a timely basis.

Shayne Abrahams: You know what? I'm looking at it now and it looks like they finally made the change. So thank you for that.

Wayne Newland: This is Wayne Newland from the Department of Florida regarding the Square Knot. I developed a worksheet that helps people understand what they really have to do and accomplish.

To get this included does that have to go through a resolution or can that be done just on a national committee basis?

Shayne Abrahams: We don't have a national committee. I would say any amendment or revision to a rule or a requirement I would suggest a resolution.

Wayne Newland: Okay, just wanted to be sure.

Shayne Abrahams: Thank you. Oh no problem. Thank you.

Well it looks like we're at the portion of let's hear from you so let's continue on if there's best practices, if there's things that you're doing that you want other folks to know. This is the portion of the conference as we begin to wind down and let's hear from you.

(Rich Jurick): All right Shayne let me start out. This is (Rich Jurick) from South Carolina.

First off we have scholastic awards each year, boys state, girls state, ROTC awards and baseball awards for youth.

None of those require any sort of a American Legion affiliation to be considered for those awards. So the question is why do we do that for Boy Scouts?

They are required to have an affiliation with either a father or grandfather being a member of the American Legion in order to be considered for that or to be sponsored by a post. And I'd like to see that addressed in the future if you don't mind.

(Karen): Well in Iowa all of our programs require American Legion sponsorship whether it be a kid that goes to boys state they have to be sponsored by a legion post.

Somebody else may be paying the fee but the Legion Post ultimately has the...

Man: (Unintelligible).

(Karen): ...say so.

(Rich Jurick): All right, let me clarify that then please. I didn't mean to be sponsored by. I said affiliated with. That means the Boy Scout requirement to be considered for Eagle Scout of the Year is that the person being nominated must have a father or grandfather who's become a member of a post. We don't require that for scholastic awards, boys state, ROTC or baseball. So let's bring everything into line.

(Karen): For the troop has to be sponsored by American Legion Post.

(Rich Jurick): Yes I've got that part.

(Karen): Yes. And...

Shayne Abrahams: This award was originally established at the request of a particular family. If you want to change that you have to go back and get the approval of the family. And it's my understanding that's not going to happen.

I personally don't have any problem with the affiliation requirement.

I do have a problem in that the form doesn't allow SAL member affiliation to be included because there are unique situations where a boy would not qualify otherwise but he has a relative that's an SAL member. And that's a little bit of a hole in the application process.

But you have to understand where this...

Woman: It's going to be (unintelligible).

Shayne Abrahams: ...award came from because the same argument is - arises with regard to the religious requirement. And that's specific to this award. It was put in place that way. It's not going to change.

(Karen): Okay so it's - so let me - so in SAL member has to be a father, has to be a descendant, a male descendent of a veteran that was eligible for the American Legion.

(Rich Jurick): Got you.

(Karen): So can't they utilize that individual instead of utilizing the SAL member?

Jim Davidson: Well yes that - this is Jim Davidson in the Department of Washington. That's true. In most cases it's that way.

We had a unique case and I wish I could remember how it worked out. But the boy could not qualify otherwise but he had a relative that was an SAL member.

And it was a unique situation. That's when we first became aware of the problem. And that's why we wrote a resolution to try to address that.

You know, it's real clear that you have to be a son or grandson of a legion member or an auxiliary member or be a member of a legion or auxiliary sponsored unit.

But the SAL is a program of the American Legion.

(Karen): Yes.

Jim Davidson: Why can't we include that in there? We're just losing out on boys that otherwise would be eligible to join through unique...

(Karen): There's a lot of...

Jim Davidson: ...circumstances.

((Crosstalk))

(Karen): ...organizations but they're a post program.

(Joe): Can I ask (unintelligible)? May I ask (unintelligible)? Hello?

Man: Yes, go ahead.

(Joe): Yes this is (Joe) out in Colorado. I know every time we go to the national convention we have a time set aside for the Standing committee to get together.

It would be my suggestion because there's a lot of things going on during the year. Could we possibly have a conference type meeting where discuss the



different types of scouting at a conference level? That way if something comes up we don't have to wait till this national convention comes up and discuss it. We can do a regional level.

Because a lot of people cannot afford to go to the national convention all the time to hear this information but sometimes they can go a little bit closer to home. Could this possibly be worked out?

Shayne Abrahams: At this point only by resolution. And I think that's what I - what Jim alluded to earlier that he's working on a resolution to develop a scouting committee.

Jim do you want to talk a little bit more about that?

Jim Stewart: Yes Jim Stewart, Department of Nevada.

Right now I'm working on a resolution to be - sponsored through my department along with a few other departments who are helping me with this.

And this whole idea is to try and create a National Legion Scouting Committee or counsel and to be more of an advisory committee to the youth activities subcommittee of the Americanism division. And not really a body to actually do anything more than do actions and communication.

Some of the things that we're trying to accomplish would be to separate American Legion into different regions that mirror the Boy Scouts of America so that regionally we can actually get that information down to the different departments from the national level down to the regional down to the departments.

Some of the things that you addressed were to create an American Legion scouting handbook to address things that specifically or are germane to American Legion and Boy Scouts, not just charter organization or information but American Legion and scouting.

Some of those things would be to advise on the Eagle Scout of the Year award, to advise on the American Legion Square Knot. So recognition would be part of it.

So there's numerous things that we would be - we'd like to have a voice and to assist, not to govern but to assist the youth activities committee of the Americanism. So that's what our plan is.

And right now one of the things I'm learning is how to actually properly write a resolution here at the Legion College. And you should be seeing something coming across the floor hopefully in the near future so that's where we're at right now.

Shayne Abrahams: Hey Jim how can these folks - what can they do to assist you?

Jim Stewart: Well right now I'm developing the information. I put out an email to all the scouting shares. Hopefully I had everybody's email.

And if possible Shayne can get - provide you with my email address to - and then I can put you on my distribution. And anytime I have information I can pass it out to you guys.

I know that some of the scouting chairs have switched and I mean I have currently your new email information. But if you can provide that to Shayne

he'll make sure that I get that and then I can make sure I - to include you on that national movement we're trying to do.

It's more about communication than anything else.

Shayne Abrahams: You know, to that point Jim I can make everyone who signed up for the conference I can make - I can post that information if you like. Some of you may not want that or we could go case by case. But I wanted to make it is easy as I can for you ladies and gentlemen.

Jim Stewart: Yes, here's a prime example. I had contacted Shayne when Eagle Scout of the Year recipient was announced. But I had submitted my own applicant and I didn't know where he had placed.

So I specifically asked where did my boy place in the rankings? And it turned out he's just missed out on the money. He was fifth. So but he said that it was going to be on a case-by-case. And I - so I sent that information out to everybody I had email addresses out to call in and - or email him, contact him and find out where your boy ended up in the rankings.

And he turned around and said, "Oh, whoa, whoa, I'm getting way too many of these." And he made that information available to everybody. So it's through this type of communication we can actually succeed.

Jim Davidson: I would - this is Jim Davidson in the Department of Washington. I would agree. This is the first year we've had that information. It has never ever been given to us. And I've been a Scouting Chairman since 1991. So I applaud that. It's nice to get some feedback.

I would like to just comment on the resolution that you're developing.

One of the best things that you can do is get your draft into the hands of the other departments so that they can submit similar resolutions to national. If we overwhelm them a little bit they are more likely to pay attention to it rather than just shovel it off as a recommended no vote which happens a lot.

The other thing that I would suggest is here in Washington it's an absolutely requirement. If you're surveying on the scouting committee as a district chairman or in my case as the department chairman you are a registered member of the Boy Scouts of America. There's no allowance for you not being a member.

We did that for a couple reasons. First was the youth protection requirement before it was a requirement elsewhere. But we also did it so that we had people that knew what was going on with the program currently.

You get people that said, "Oh yes I was a Cub Scout 50 years ago." "I know all aboard about Boy Scouts." No they don't. This program changes annually and we need people that are up to date.

And I know there are some departments that don't require if even their chairman to be a registered member. And I think that's a folly.

But I would suggest in any resolution that if we do this that that named individual has to be a current registered member of the Boy Scouts of America.

Jim Stewart: That is exactly what we're working on. And that kind of information is valuable information.

And that's one of the reasons why I've been reaching out. And I actually have five different individuals that have agree from different departments to help me through this on this ad hoc community to develop this resolution.

Shayne Abrahams: Hey Jim why don't you just - why don't you share your contact information with folks? And if they want to reach out to you then, you know...

((Crosstalk))

Jim Stewart: Sure. I'll just do that.

Shayne Abrahams: Yes.

Jim Stewart: My email address is controller, that's C-O-N-T-R-O-L-L-E-R@bordertowncasinorv. That's all one word. That's B-O-R-D-E-R-T-O-W-N Casinorv that's Romeo Victor.com.

(Michelle): Go out to everybody with his email address that has registered for the conference.

Shayne Abrahams: Thank you (Michelle).

Wayne Newland: Can we go back to the Square Knot for a moment? This is Wayne Newland in Florida.

Would somebody walk us through what happens when the application for the Square Knot arrives at the headquarters? Why does it take so long for approval?

Shayne Abrahams: I think probably this group I'm probably the only one that can answer that.

Woman: Yes.

Shayne Abrahams: How long did you have to wait for yours sir?

Wayne Newland: Six months.

Shayne Abrahams: Six months?

Wayne Newland: Maybe more.

Shayne Abrahams: What I would suggest is when you send your application over just CC me.  
That way I can track it.

Obviously not only are we overseeing scouting programs but youth cadette  
law enforcement or (unintelligible) junior shooting.

So when you send your application just give me a call and - or send me an  
email and I can help expedite that. How's that sound?

Wayne Newland: That sounds like a great idea.

Shayne Abrahams: All right.

(Michelle): Can I chime in on that?

Shayne Abrahams: No I think we're good. We're good.

(Michelle): Okay.

Man: Good old boy's club, shut her down.

Shayne Abrahams: Okay, anything else?

(Carl): This is (Carl) in Michigan, a question. If there's any way that the American Legion could tie in with each state's may be local council?

Like in Michigan we charter 71 units. If there was son way that we could get a representative or a contact number with each of the troops so that we could do more in developing a relationship with the local scout units.

(Marcus): Hi. This is (Marcus). Here's a couple of suggestions. I will provide a document that has the address, the scout executive's name, contact information in of all of our 280 some councils that we have in the nation. And I'll even break it down by region.

The other thing is I think it was (John) that mentioned beascout.org. If you go to that Web page and you put in your ZIP Code I believe it was it will show you the local council closest to you. And it will have the contact information there. So you can do it that way.

But that's something that I want to work hard to make sure that all of you have direct contact with the local scout executive and the volunteer support that there's there to help you do more scouting in your community. Does that answer?

(Carl): Yes that helped.

Jim Davidson: So yes, this is Jim Davidson in Washington. The only caveat that I would add to that is your scout executive is not going to talk to you about that. You're

going to have to talk to the registrar. And even that's a crap shoot as whether or not you can get the names of the units because of some errors in the system.

So but that's who you need to talk to is talk to the registrar.

(Marcus): And don't forget I gave you my phone number. If you do have something that is - it's not being answered, not being taken care of contact me. And we can do it that way.

((Crosstalk))

Rick Pond: Yes this is Rick from New Hampshire. And I've been setting up to meet with the council executive since I get some information from the American Legion.

So he was open for me to come down and have a talk with him.

(Marcus): And what kind of information are you seeking out?

Rick Pond: Well what I'm doing is I'm putting together the legion district T3 if you will. And I'm going to pass that on to the council and hopefully to their T3 for T3s so that we can open up some lines of communication.

(Marcus): Okay.

Rick Pond: And he seems to be open for me to come down and have a talk with him.

(Marcus): Well it seems like you're on your way but is there anything else that you need from me or from the legion itself?



Rick Pond: I don't think so. I'm working in on, you know, just on those - on the primary level. I've been the chairman here for 150 years.

So, you know, I - it's just basically getting my district commanders here to give me their Boy Scout chairman so that I can pass that on to the council.

(Marcus): Good. Thank you so much.

If I can just add personally I welcome the feedback that you could provide with any best practices that you have going in your council like this one. I would really like to know the outcome so that maybe we can find out how it worked and where you actually are doing it - are doing with it so that we could share that with other states.

Also I would welcome the opportunity to hear some successes that are going on with you and your local council either in the program, either in the membership or the training - anything like that because if so - I know there's plenty of good things going on. And if we could find out about them and then share with other states I think it would only benefit the organization overall.

(Carl): Oh, I agree. I agree.

Jim Stewart: Jim Stewart with Department of Nevada. One of the things I - and (Marcus) is saying it. Whenever I attend whether it's the Western Region conference, national, even my council when I'm representing the American Legion I wear my American Legion cap.

And then they - I'll see a difference and go, oh, this is American Legion. So it actually gets our name out there that we support scouting. And like I said, (Marcus) has seen me wear my hat so...

Jim Stewart: I've actually had the - this is New Hampshire again. I've actually had the opportunity to present the American Legion program a number of years ago to the Northeast Region out in Massachusetts. I was the only (there) wearing my cap. But there were others present. (Unintelligible).

Jim Stewart: Another thing, this is Jim Stewart again. A couple weeks ago I was here in Indianapolis to attend the NAC meeting for the Sons of American Legion. And Doc Gibbs, Chairman of the Americanism Division actually gave me an opportunity to stand in front of his committee and talk about scouting and relationship of scouting to the Sons of the American Legion as well as the American Legion and ask for their support.

And their committee gave me an overwhelming support of pursuing this national committee.

And it - we have to take every opportunity we can to toot our horn about scouting and the legion.

Man: Yes we...

((Crosstalk))

Wayne Newland: This is Wayne Newland in Florida. We've had very good results down here by presenting the Square Knot at the local council awards dinner.

And the local councils down here had been very good about giving us time on their program to make this award.

Man: Cool beans.

Kathy Nees: Motion to adjourn.

Shayne Abrahams: Okay. Well...

Kathy Nees: How's that Shayne?

Shayne Abrahams: Thank you Kathy.

((Crosstalk))

Shayne Abrahams: Having said that again I want to thank everybody for participating. In terms of action items for me, you know, it - to get anything done I mean you guys know the legion. It's, you know, the pathway or the process or the moving the train is - or the engine on the train is the resolution.

So I think Jim has a great headstart on something. If you are interested in keeping up with that please contact him directly. He provided you with his contact information.

If there's something that I can do to assist any of you in furthering your scouting programs I'm available as well as (Marcus) and (Barbara).

So again we thank you and if there aren't any other questions or comments I'll turn it over to Elwin.

Jim Davidson: This is Jim Davidson of the Department of Washington. Can we make sure that we have an up to date email list?

Because you've made a number of references to materials having been sent out in preparation for this teleconference. And all I received was the invitation to join and then the how to dial in, that's it.

I didn't get an agenda or that sort of thing so something's wrong with...

Shayne Abrahams: Let me ask you a quick - how did you receive the information or how - to join in?

Kathy Nees: From (Michelle).

((Crosstalk))

Jim Davidson: The invitation that came the other day I got from (Michelle). But that was a month or so ago I got the notice that was kind of generically broadcast out that, you know, it's - if there was a scouting chairman available. So I was on a list there somewhere.

But I received absolutely nothing else from you so...

Shayne Abrahams: Okay.

Jim Davidson: ...I said you still have a name of a chairman that was only chairman for six months in this department so that's got to be fixed.

Shayne Abrahams: Yes. Well let's do this. Why don't you just email me your correct information? And all the again all the information presentation information's going to be found on our Scouting page.

So again I think you for joining and Elwin?

Elwin Spray: Okay and just since my name is probably not on the list my name is Elwin Spray. And my email address is elwinspray@gmail. So it's a very simple thing.

So in any case what I'd like to do is just say thank you for to Shayne for allowing us to participate in this presentation.

And I really want to thank every one of you, everybody who's on there and all the guys who are - and ladies who are involved in your organizations, your departments for your support of scouting just remembering that it's - it - all the program is always about the youth.

And so whatever we're doing is we're trying to make sure that as we continue to go ahead we're looking at the future of America and we're looking at the future of the world and it's - it really is all about the youth.

In doing a benediction I'd like to ask I think for travel mercies for all of us.

And I'd specifically like to ask us to look at the Philmont Grace which is a scouting prayer and ask you to think about the - each of the components of it as I read through it as we ask for food, for arraignment, for life, for opportunity, for friendship and fellowship we thank the oh Lord. So Amen and I think we're adjourned. Thank you.

Shayne Abrahams: All right, thank you everyone.

Elwin Spray: Thanks.

Shayne Abrahams: We'll see you next year.

Elwin Spray: Thanks (Michelle). Thanks (Michelle) and thanks Shayne.

Shayne Abrahams: All right thank you sir.

Man: Thank you.

Man: Thank you Elwin.

(Michelle): Thank you Elwin...

((Crosstalk))

Shayne Abrahams: Bye-bye.

END