

# Large Crews

A series of articles

By Pete Mapes, NCAC Crew 27 Associate Advisor



Northeast Region Crew 8 World Scout Jamboree 2015  
Crew Advisor Dr Pete Mapes and a group from Crew 27

Program is the most important element of a strong Senior Division Unit (Venturing, Sea Scouting and Exploring). Without program that is interesting and fun for the Venturers, Explorers and Sea Scouts, any Unit will flounder and fail. For this reason, Dr. Pete Mapes leads off a series of articles this month on Large Crews with a discussion of Program. Over the next several months he will follow up with articles on Large Unit Operations, Recruiting and Youth Leadership. Stay tuned for a peek at what turned into the largest Venturing Crew in the fourth largest Council in BSA!



# Large Crews PROGRAM

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I am fortunate to be associated with a remarkable group of young adults who form Venturing Crew 27 in the National Capital Area Council. Their motivations range from a passionate love of the outdoors to a grudging admission that what they do with the Crew is probably good for them. In fact, the only motivation that consistently NEVER works is when a parent or guardian MAKES them join. We get about three of those a year and it never works. The reason that nearly all of our Venturers show up – is PROGRAM. Crew 27 is currently the largest Venturing Crew in the Council (4<sup>th</sup> largest Council in the USA) and has 55 youth members.



John Henry's Tunnel 2013NSJ

First you need to understand that we are an 'Outdoor Crew.' This is not what Scouting bills as 'High Adventure' although we do sometimes stray into that realm. Our focus is getting outside to do things together; we seek friendship and adventure while emphasizing leadership and service. Through this, we obtain personal growth, teamwork development and a real sense of accomplishment; all while having a 'ton of fun.' That is one of the secrets, it has to be fun.

Crew program is published over a year in advance. It includes Crew meeting dates and activities. We do retain flexibility though. For instance, we didn't include the upcoming northeast region, area-6 activity 'Phenomenon' in our annual plan but as it drew near, a number of our Venturers decided they wanted to attend. One of the Venturers volunteered as the activity chair a week before the cutoff for event registration and it was 'off to the races.'

In general, meetings occur every other week and last for 90 minutes. Meetings should address business and, when possible include a game or a guest speaker. Our published Crew program ends at the end of August each year. Our new officers are elected at the end of January each year as our Crew recharter. One of the first tasks of the new President is to construct the next Crew activity schedule lasting from the end of August in the year of election through the end of August in the following year. Each month from September through May there should be two or three Crew meetings, at least one MiniCrew meeting for each MiniCrew and at least one overnight Crew activity. Publishing a solid schedule over a year in advance is CRITICAL to the success of a Crew. The Crew President presents the schedule to the Crew Committee each year and when the Committee approves it, they are telling the Crew



Crew 27 at an Awesome Venturers Arena Show

that the Committee will support the events with any necessary resources, people, equipment and funds. The Crew schedule should also include First Aid/CPR classes, Crew Officer Orientation, Personal Safety Training, ILS(C), NYLT, Time Management Training, Project Management Training and Ser-

NER-Crew 27 Master Schedule 2016-17 is in FORUM Attachments

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**MiniCrew = Patrol;** with the difference being that with 7 to 10 Venturers each, our MiniCrews are the size of full sized Crews in Venturing. Two 'Guides' serve as MiniCrew leaders. One is elected, the other appointed by the one who was elected. They function like the President and Vice President of normal sized Crews.. We call them Guides because the current Venturing Program has no allocation for a Patrol Leader equivalent!

Everything needed for obtaining awards through Summit and the RANGER Rank needs to be made available and the Venturers have to be able to count on it occurring. Venturers are very busy people and if they cannot plan ahead, they will not show up. Our local Service Area VOA failed essentially on this very point – the lack of a long range schedule – our Council VOA has similar problems – no published long range schedule.

Picking activity chairs is a crucial function for the Crew. In general, the President asks for volunteers about three months out from an event during the Crew meeting. It then falls to the Vice President for Program to follow up and make sure the volunteers are complying with the checklist in the Venturing Handbook and getting everything done. This makes sure under-performing Venturers are identified and either helped or replaced before their performance impacts a Crew event. Realize that being an activity chair is an incremental learning opportunity. The activity chair can delegate menu planning to a Venturer working on the RANGER cooking requirement. The activity chair needs to be sure everyone has space in a tent, the permission form is prepared a month ahead and circulated, the tour permit is filed, the cost of the event is established and the money and receipts are collected and turned in to the Treasurer. This is in addition to coordinating with the venue and making sure all the permissions are obtained and everyone is included in the communications loop. Activity chairs consult The Guide to Safe Scouting and ensure their adult volunteers have the necessary training to support the activity. They also ensure the presence of both male and female adults for the event duration and ask the Committee for assistance if it is needed to get information for the tour permit or assure that someone with required training is present. Being an activity chair is a big job. For the summer adventure trip, we usually form a committee of at least three Venturers because it is such a big task.

Summers are very successful program periods for the Crew as a whole. In general, our first week of summer in late June consists of offering either Girl's State or Boy's State to our rising high school seniors. The Crew does this in conjunction with either the American Legion Auxiliary or the American Legion and raises donations to support our young adults who wish to attend. For the remainder of the Crew, the option exists for them to provide service at a District Cub Scout Day Camp during the week of Boy's and Girl's State.



Grace at at Girls' State

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The second week of summer sees the Crew depart for the Venturing program at Goshen Scout Reservation. The Crew attends the Venturing Program conducted at Camp Bowman. This week is generally the last fragment of June and the first few days of July. In Base camp, the Venturers live in MiniCrew size campsites. There is no dining hall so all food is prepared in the campsites. Most new Venturers are working on the first half of the RANGER rank. They have completed American Red Cross First Aid, CPR & AED before arriving at camp. They complete their camp cooking requirements (we eat very well with all those Dutch oven dishes) and work on Wilderness Survival and Land Navigation for Core requirements. They also spend three hours each morning in COPE

(Challenging Outdoor Personal Experience) so they can do the first part of the RANGER COPE elective. If you would like to see a video about the Venturing Base Camp Program at Camp Bowman, watch: <https://www.facebook.com/GOSHENNCAC>

The third week of summer sees the Crew continue at Venturing Camp with the new Venturers continuing at the Camp Bowman Base Camp and the experienced Venturers either teaching base camp or donning a pack and heading out into the mountains for a week as part of Goshen's Lenhok'sin program. In base camp, the Venturers complete COPE by teaching at the morning and afternoon courses on at least one day. They then take on a second elective like Lifeguarding, Ecology, Conservation, Shooting Sports on one of many other options so that they leave their first two weeks at camp halfway to RANGER. Crew 27 recognizes the accomplishment of Venturers completing four core and two elective RANGER requirements by awarding an 'Outdoor Bronze' Award. No longer an official, nationally recognized rank, the Crew's Outdoor Bronze Award recognizes the recipient as being half way to RANGER. If you want to read about the Bowman Base Camp experience, go to the Crew web site: [kensington27.mytroop.us](http://kensington27.mytroop.us) and download the .pdfs titled: 'FORUM0914Bowman2014Emma.pdf' and 'GOSHEN2015FORUM1015.pdf'.

During Lenhok'sin, Venturers cover 50 to 80 miles carrying everything on their backs. They do service projects in the wilds like cleaning up hunting camps, and hike to places accessible only on foot in the North Mountain Wildlife Management Area and the Goshen Wildlife Management Area or the Washington and Jefferson National Forest that abut the Goshen Scout Reservation. They purify surface water to drink and exist completely without prepared campsites while subsisting on dehydrated rations. In general, these expeditions consist of 8 to 10 Venturers (a MiniCrew) and two adult advisors, sometimes three if a new advisor is being trained. The leader of the trek is a Venturer who serves as the Crew leader. This summer the job falls to our Crew President because she is leading the Philmont trip as well. On the Lenhok'sin trek, Venturers cool their feet in gorgeous waterfalls, see wildlife in its habitat, take in glorious mountaintop views rising three thousand feet above the valley lowlands and really bond in an experience they treasure. Some Lenhok'sin bound Venturers design their Lenhok'sin program to add program alternatives like whitewater, caving, paddle boarding, mountain biking or a host of other options available at Lenhok'sin Trail Camp. If you want to read about the Lenhok'sin experience, go to the Crew web site: [kensington27.mytroop.us](http://kensington27.mytroop.us) and download the .pdfs titled: 'FORUM1113draft.pdf' and 'FORUM0914Lenhoksin2014.pdf'.

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There is a little secret to two weeks at camp for Scouts and Venturers. During the first week, they exceed their usual outing duration. This creates stress. People you could say 'good bye' to after a weekend overnight are still there Tuesday morning when you wake up, and you have to work with them – even if they annoy you. Tensions usually peak Tuesday night and some storming occurs that degrades performance. From that point forward, the ability of the group to work together improves and the second week at camp leads to much higher performance than the Crew experienced in the first week. This translates into better focus and more advancement achievement. Scout Units can seriously benefit from two consecutive weeks at camp. While this has fallen out of favor among Scout Troops, usually due to the difficulty freeing up adults to attend, the complexity of the Venturing advancement and experiences demands two consecutive weeks in the woods to build the requisite skills.



BackwoodsView 2013 Lenhoksin

The Crew arrives home from Venturing Camp and the new Venturers go to National Youth Leadership Training (NYLT) the next day. The Crew usually sends a dozen new Venturers each year. This year recruitment has been strong so seventeen are lined up to attend. NYLT is an integral part of leadership skill instruction, practice and development: essential to the operation of a Crew and an award requirement. The week-long residential program provides training in logistics (menus and equipment), communication, planning, conflict resolution, teamwork and the patrol (MiniCrew) system essential for every Venturer to understand. Our Crew's goal is to have everyone NYLT trained in their first year of Venturing. We only miss one or two Venturers a year, usually due to family or sport program commitments.

After NYLT, the Crew prepares for either high adventure (Philmont, Northern Tier or equivalent) or a Jamboree. World Jamborees occur every four years and National Jamborees also occur every four years so a Crew can schedule a Jamboree every other year. Last year fourteen of our Venturers went to Kirarahama,



Arena Show 2013 National Jamboree

Japan as part of the 36 youth in Northeast Region's Venturing Crew 8. Three more went as ISTs (Youth participants must be at least 14 and not yet 18 – ISTs are 18 and up). We also sent three adults as ISTs and one adult as a Regional Crew Advisor. They had a great time. If you want to read about it, go to the Crew web site at [kensington27.mytroop.us](http://kensington27.mytroop.us) and download the three .pdfs that describe the experience.



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They are '[Forum0815Shakedown.pdf](#)', '[Forum0915.pdf](#)' & '[Forum1015.pdf](#)'. If you want to see a video of what the 2015 World Scout Jamboree was like, go look at the seven minute video at this site: [www.23wsj.jp](http://www.23wsj.jp) it is awesome! In 2013, we took 19 Venturers to the 2013 National Scout Jamboree. The 2013 National Jamboree was the first National Jamboree that allowed full participation by Venturers – about 2,000 Venturers, 23,000 Scouts, 600 international Scouts and Scouters and 8,000 staff attended. Of the 2,000 Venturers, half were young men and half were young women. We got to camp with roughly 600 Scouts and leaders from 30 other countries around the world – it was like a miniature World Jamboree. If you want to see what a National Jamboree is like, go look at this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mdAoyKkaXbA> National Jamborees are program based, World Jamborees are culturally based – they are very different experiences! One of our Venturers wrote up her experience at the 2013 National Jamboree, go to the Crew web site at [kensington27.mytroop.us](http://kensington27.mytroop.us) and download the .pdf '[FORUM1013.pdf](#)' that describes the experience. The next World Jamboree (The 24<sup>th</sup>) will be hosted by the three nations of North America at The Summit Bechtel Reserve in West Virginia where the BSA National Jamborees are held. Go look at [www.2019wsj.org](http://www.2019wsj.org) As a result; I think the 2017 National Scout Jamboree will be really super for Venturing as the number of foreign scouts camping with us is likely to soar as the world comes to check out

The Summit. If you want to go to the 2017 National Scout Jamboree as a Venturer, don't wait to sign up. Our Council allocation of two Crews is more than halfway full and we are still 16 months out from the Jamboree. If your Council isn't sending a Crew to the 2017 National Jamboree, find a Council that is, and sign up with them. Since 2016 is a summer between Jamborees, Crew 27 is launching a Philmont Expedition. This generates lots of additional training and program for the Philmont bound Venturers and leaders to make sure they are ready to backpack. The whole process is lots of fun. The point is that we offer one major activity every summer at a national or international level outside of camp. Jamborees and high adventure are expensive so not everyone can afford go. For Venturers of limited means, we often spend two years helping them raise the money to attend Jamborees. This involves product sales like Scout popcorn,



Water Obstacles 2013 National Jamboree

jobs, donations and scholarships. Jamborees and high adventure activities are really capstone, once in a life-time experiences that change people for the better. We really strive to get everyone to at least one.

After everyone returns from their high adventure/jamboree experience, the Crew does an adventure trip every summer. The adventure trip is a hodge podge of activities loosely organized around a theme.



Venturers at Tokyo Museum  
2015 World Jamboree

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Usually a committee of three Venturers puts this together. Last summer we spent a week in New England with a Vermont focus, it was immense fun. If you want to read about it, go to the Crew web site at [kensington27.mytroop.us](http://kensington27.mytroop.us) and download the .pdf describing the experience: 'Forum1015VTTRIP.pdf'. The summer before, we went to the eastern shore of Michigan's lower peninsula and the theme was 'In Search of Paul Bunyan.' In 2013 we went to Ohio to learn about Native American History and visit the National Museum of the Air Force. In 2012 we did the Shakedown at The Summit with two MiniCrews (16 Venturers and 4 adults). It was a serious good time! Each summer adventure trip is designed to be low cost (\$200 - \$250/person) and lots of fun. We try to coordinate a free place to camp – An aircraft hangar in Ohio, a backyard in Michigan, another backyard in Vermont. We search out local Crews and offer them our backyards so they can have an inexpensive place to stay when they visit Washington D.C. It is a very cost effective trade and we love meeting Venturers from other parts of the country.

The whole Crew never shows up for any one activity and this is the advantage of a large Crew. If only 5 people (10% of the Crew show up), we still have a great time – if 10% of a Crew of ten Venturers showed up, the trip would get cancelled. Some of our weekend trips are also on the Crew web site at [kensington27.mytroop.us](http://kensington27.mytroop.us). Go take a look at them. A well-attended trip has 15 to 25 participants. An expensive trip like our recent ski weekend to Timberline had six Venturers and two adults. In general, we don't cancel and we go with those who are interested. The weekend trips are usually low cost – about \$25/person. For our low income families, we try to get wealthy families to help cover the cost of the Venturers who want to come but cannot afford it. The Advisors work this issue.

I hope this article serves as a help for one way to do program for a large Crew. It would be great if other successful Crews would share their programs in The Forum so all of the Senior Division Units (Explorers, Sea Scouts & Venturers) could benefit from their experiences.



## Pete Mapes

Our author is the founding advisor of Crew 27 who served in that capacity for over 6 years. With the help of a committed committee and well trained associate advisors, the Crew 27 adults have been able to empower a completely youth led Crew with massive program opportunities and a uniquely effective organization. It is now the largest Crew in the fourth largest Council in the BSA. Pete is a retired Air Force Pilot Physician who served as a Command Pilot in B-52s & T-37s while simultaneously serving as a Chief Flight Surgeon (a credentialed and privileged doctor). He was on active military duty for 38 years. Pete is Wood Badge Trained and holds the Scouter's Key as a Venturing Advisor as well at the Distinguished Eagle Scout Award, Silver Beaver & District Award of Merit. He and his wife have three grown up children, both daughters were Venturers and hold Girl Scout Gold Awards, their son was also a Venturer and is an Eagle Scout.

# Large Crews OPERATION

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The operational design of a large Venturing Crew seems to be a lost art if you refer to the current Venturing Handbook. The models presented are inconsistent and seem to have forgotten many of the timeless tenets of Scouting – like the Patrol System. The current patches offered by the BSA National Office do not include a ‘Patrol Leader’ equivalent and that position isn’t mentioned in the current Venturing Handbook. Suffice it to say that while Program brings young adults to Venturing, the operational model of a large Crew is an essential component to the maintenance of the membership. Venturers need to ‘own’ the Crew and that is tough to do when a Crew is too small to support a fully youth led organization. What is the magic number? Many years ago, in the 1960’s, JLT and adult leader courses taught that 22 Scouts were necessary to fully implement and sustain a ‘Boy-led’ Troop. I believe that number was arrived at by a study commissioned by the BSA National office but I do not have a reference.



Communication Games at ILSC 2016



Crew 27 Guys at ILSC

This goes a long way to explain what happens to the typical Venturing Crew. It usually grows out of a Troop, frequently as a mechanism to allow the sisters to go along with the Boy Scouts, or as a bonus program for the senior Scouts in a bid to give them their own program that is ramped up from the program of the Troop. Unfortunately, in most cases, both of these strategies fail and the average Crew lasts about four years before disbanding only to reappear again in a future incarnation for the same reasons. Most Crews have a failed model, dependent on a Scout Troop, and created for noble but unsustainable reasons. It is tough to run a Venturing Crew with a Scout Troop because the Troop schedule and activities always seem to take precedence. In addition, when the program is designed to bring the sisters camping, fourteen year old and older young women are attending program designed for boys 11 to 13 years old. Is the disconnect obvious yet? To say that it doesn’t hold their interest long would be an understatement. The fascination usually lasts less than a year.

So ideally if a Crew develops from a Troop, it will separate at the first opportunity and develop its own program independent of the Troop. This requires resources and a commitment to a program that holds the interest of the Crew. In fact, since leadership development is a core principle of the Venturing ALPS model, it must be led by the Venturers. I plan to address the training continuum in another article so in this article I will concentrate on the organization of a large Crew model that has worked pretty well for several years.

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How do we operationalize what we do? The first thing that needs to be mastered is operational span of control. Robert Baden-Powell understood that most people are able to communicate well with a group of people the size of a human family – five to nine people. He gleaned this insight from his own family and from years of soldiering in the British Army. If you really want to understand Robert Baden-Powell, you would do well to read “Baden-Powell, Two Lives of a Hero” by William Harcourt and Olave Baden-Powell. It was this insight that resulted in ‘The Patrol System.’ A patrol is a group of five to nine Scouts who elect a leader and work together as a family. To quote Baden-Powell: “The Patrol System is not one method by which Scouting for boys can be carried on, it is THE ONLY method.” He further went on to observe that: “The object of the Patrol Method is not so much saving the Scoutmaster trouble as it is giving responsibility to the boy.” Always wanting to separate themselves from the Boy Scout male monoculture in the USA, our Venturers prefer calling their patrols ‘MiniCrews.’ In fact, a MiniCrew in Crew 27 is the equivalent of most Crews in our Council from a numerical standpoint. One of the hardest to achieve and highest value activities for the Mini-Crew is to get them to meet outside of Crew meetings. MiniCrew meetings should be pure fun attained through games, service projects or working together on advancement. MiniCrews should function as a family with each member understanding the likes and dislikes of the others and the elected leader being effective at both communications and organization. MiniCrew Guides (Leaders) are responsible for organizing the activities of their MiniCrews. Crew 27 uses the ‘Guide’ Position for the leaders and assistant leaders of the MiniCrews because it is specifically allowed to count for achieving the current Venturing Awards. There is no ‘Patrol Leader’ equivalent in the current program and the Crew 27 Guides who lead and help lead our MiniCrews are functioning like Crew Presidents and Vice Presidents of the ‘normally’ sized Crews in Venturing.



Elisabeth swears in her Crew Officer Staff



Elisabeth Swears in the MiniCrew Leaders

We are just growing to our fifth active MiniCrew now. We’ve thought about what we would do if we exceeded nine MiniCrews (That would be more MiniCrew Guides than a Crew President could be expected to manage). The option we’ve considered is splitting into an ‘A’ Crew and a ‘B’ Crew – each with a President, Staff, Advisors and five MiniCrews. They would share a committee. Haven’t had to go there yet, but it could be on the horizon if we continue to grow at our current rate. The Patrol System mantra still applies – no one person leads more than 5 to 9 other people.

# Large Crews OPERATION

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Swearing in New MiniCrew Leaders



Wrapt Attention at Summer Awards

Some of our Crew members have left the area for college, others are focused on ‘in season’ sports and some are even hospitalized for periods of time. For these Venturers, regular attendance as part of a MiniCrew doesn’t make good sense and is a drain on the MiniCrew Guides time and energy. At any one time, up to a fifth of the Crew is ‘inactive.’ We address this by keeping an ‘inactive’ list. The people on the ‘inactive’ list receive regular email communications from the Crew President about upcoming activities and are welcome to join in but are not currently part of one of the MiniCrew families. They ‘stay up’ on meetings by reading minutes on the website and are welcome to attend activities.

Crew meetings are run by the Crew President. In Crew 27, the Crew President and the MiniCrew Guides are elected by their constituencies: the President by a simple majority representing at least half of the registered Venturers in the Crew (Quorum) at a meeting with the announced purpose (scheduled a year in advance) of electing the Crew Officers. MiniCrew Guides are elected by a simple majority of the assembled members of the MiniCrew (Quorum) at a meeting with the announced purpose of electing the Crew Officers. Almost all other Crew Officer positions are appointed, either by the Crew President, or the MiniCrew Guide (in the case of the MiniCrew Assistant Guide). Appointed Officers may be removed by the individual who appointed them for cause; elected Officers may be removed by impeachment and a majority vote of the constituency they serve. The officers earning leadership credit that are not appointed by the Crew President or Guides are the Den Chiefs. These officers help with local Cub Scout Dens just as Den Chiefs from Boy Scout Troops do. They have to complete specific training before being appointed by the Crew Advisor and must be requested by a Cub Scout Pack.



CLC Late Nights PLanning



Girls from 27 headed for the 2013 NSJ

# Large Crews OPERATION

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The Crew President also presides at the Crew Leadership Council (CLC). The first task of the CLC each year is to help the President develop the program for the next year and advise the President (if asked) on who to appoint to the Crew Staff as officers. From that point on, the CLC meets roughly bimonthly to handle the routine business of the Crew. CLC meetings are held where the Crew meets or in the home of the Crew President, the Advisor, an Associate Advisor or a Guide. The Secretary attends to keep the minutes. The Treasurer attends when requested to give a financial report, the Quartermaster attends when something is needed by the Crew. The Webmaster/mistress is usually absent but the Vice President for Administration is usually present. The Crew Guides are the voting members. The Crew President votes only to break a tie. Routine agenda items are scheduling service hours, dealing with 'pop-up' activities, supporting Council and District Recruiting at Program Launches and other events and cooperating with other Crews.



ILSC 2016 A Big One



Venturing Advisors

Why do we appoint all of our officers except for the President and the Guides? The principal reason is that we are creating an elected executive. The subordinate officers must be people that the elected officers feel they can trust and work with – giving the elected officers the ability to appoint them provides the best guarantee of cooperation.

The President appoints the Vice President for Administration. In Crew 27, the VP-Admin supervises and trains the Secretary, the Webmaster/mistress, the Historian, the Librarian, and the Treasurer. VP-Admin makes sure minutes of meetings and Crew Leader Council (CLC) meetings are posted to the Crew Web Site the next day by ensuring that the Secretary who takes the minutes gets them to the Webmaster/mistress immediately. This allows absent Venturers to go to the Web Site and catch up on what they missed. The Historian is responsible for managing the production of articles about Crew events. If you'd like to read some of these articles, they are on the front of the Crew Web Site and do not require a password to see. Take a look: [kensington27.mytroop.us](http://kensington27.mytroop.us) the job of the Historian is essential to recruiting. The Librarian (Guide) manages and, when necessary, transports the Crew Library, but most importantly, issues a Venturing Handbook and Boy Scout Field Book to every new Venturer. You can't play the game if you don't have a gamebook! The Treasurer keeps track of Crew funds and works hand in hand with the Committee Treasurer and the Advisors to have an accurate accounting available for the Crew President. The Treasurer also receives funds from Activity Chairs and helps to resolve fund reports from activities.

# Large Crews OPERATION

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The President also appoints the Vice President for Program. In Crew 27, the VP-Program supervises and trains the Quartermaster and the Activity Chairs. Our goal for Crew equipment is to have each Venturer own their own backpacking kit. A backpacking kit is easily adaptable to car camping but fixed camp equipment is not back packable. People who do not understand this continually seek to have the Crew procure large heavy equipment. This tendency must be discouraged at every turn with the exception of Dutch ovens that are essential for the RANGER Rank cooking core requirement. A Venturing Crew is not a Scout Troop and having the correct equipment is pretty important. The Quartermaster should always have a list of what the Crew has for equipment. When something breaks, he or she should notify the Crew Leader Council and ask for funds to replace or acquire what is needed for Crew operations. Our committee expects the youth to approve and manage the funds so expenses rarely go to the Committee except as a note on the Treasurer's report. Each time a Venturer volunteers to be an Activity Chair, the VP-Program refers them to the checklist page in the Venturing Handbook that they must complete and then stands ready to answer questions and follow up with them to ensure they get stuff done on time. The VP-Program reports on the activity planning progress at CLCs and Activity Chairs report to the entire Crew at regular Crew Meetings.



Elisabeth is the New Crew President

Emma (MiniCrew Leader) Receiving Venturing Silver

Training is important and I'll cover leadership development training in another article but the Crew President trains the MiniCrew Guides and the Vice Presidents. The VP-Admin trains the Secretary, Treasurer, Librarian (Guide), Historian and Webmaster. The VP-Program trains the Quartermaster and the Activity Chairs. The training is important because it communicates the intent of the President for how he or she intends to run the Crew during the year. We ask each incoming President to write job descriptions for their appointed officers, that way, when a Venturer is asked to serve, they can read exactly what will be expected of them before they have to decide to take the job. The job descriptions for the President and the MiniCrew Guides are pretty well set in stone by the Advisor and the outgoing President before the Venturers are elected for the coming year.

Advisors are important to a large Crew. The overall Advisor works directly with the Crew President and appointed Crew Officers. The Advisor gets some assistance from the Crew Committee in the provision of an adult Treasurer to work with the youth Treasurer. The Advisor is responsible for posting advancement records to the Internet Advancement web site or designating another advisor to perform that function. (A committee member could do this as well but the Advisor is closer to the process and more likely to get it done correctly).

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The Advisor appoints an Associate Advisor to work with each MiniCrew. These Associate Advisors help the MiniCrew Guide get transportation sorted for MiniCrew members to/from meetings and serves a 'sounding board' for MiniCrew activities. Recently a new MiniCrew Guide wanted to take the MiniCrew to play LASER tag. The Associate Advisor pointed out that this was a proscribed activity in the 'Guide to Safe Scouting' and asked the Guide to change her venue. The Advisor details who will give the Advisor's minute at each Crew meeting, the rest of the meeting is the responsibility of the Crew President. One of the most important Advisor roles is that of the 'alarm clock.' Teenagers (and many adults) have a tremendous ability to procrastinate – this is why I'm collecting summer planning documents that were due at the end of January in March from 1/3 of the Crew. The Advisors need to gently be asking – 'when do we need to get that done by?' When a Venturer provides an unusually optimistic answer, the Advisor needs to play pessimist and start the 'what if?' game. The constant give and take between the Venturers and the Advisors makes sure everything stays on track. The Advisor has the biggest job with the Crew President and staff but the Associate Advisors need to ensure MiniCrew meetings happen and that the MiniCrew Guides work to have their Venturers meet Crew suspenses. The Advisors also keep their fingers on the financial pulses of the Venturers and notify the Committee when a Venturer is falling on hard times that would exclude him/her from Crew activities. About a quarter of our Crew are from families well below the poverty level in our area. Some families do not have vehicles and cannot provide transport. Other families have disabled siblings or adults requiring constant care and some are simply unemployed and on welfare. There are the usual rates of divorce and all of these social issues tear at the financial support that each Venturer can expect from their families. The Crew works to keep everyone able to attend its activities – sometimes the best place for a Venturer is out with the Crew on a weekend and not in a home that is crumbling around him/her. This is all done on the QT and is not for public consumption.



I Love My Venturing Den Chief



Liam Receives Summit and RANGER

There is another very critical role for the Advisors – managing controlled failure. At times, Venturers will, against advice to the contrary, persist on a course of action that will not get them to where they want to go. When this occurs, sometimes the Advisors need to fight all of their instincts telling them to jump in and rescue the situation so that the Venturer actually learns that it is their responsibility to get things done and no one will 'save their bacon.' The issue is knowing when to let things fail and when not to. This is Advisor art! Ideally, a failure will have little effect on others and will primarily impact the Venturer persisting in the ill-advised or delayed course of action. Usually, the consequence is the loss of a planned Crew or MiniCrew activity but sometimes the consequences are less dire. At any rate, controlled failure is essential to the development of leadership and responsibility. If the Venturers believe an adult will always jump in when things go a rye, they have little incentive to strive for excellence or really care about what they do. Advisors need to learn to manage, and sometimes enhance – controlled failure.

# Large Crews OPERATION

By Pete Mapes, NCAC Crew 27 Associate Advisor

The Committee exists to provide five types of support according to the current Venturing Committee Training Program. These areas of support are Transportation, Safety (Tour Plan Compliance & Submission – ensures the right people with the right training are going on trips), Finances, Adult Association (2 deep coverage – ‘Chaperones’ and mentoring) and First Aid. Everything they exist to do is pretty well covered by these five items. Unlike Troop and Pack Committees, a Venturing Committee becomes a resource for the Crew President. The Committee provides two adults to the Board of Reviews appointed by the Crew President – Committee members do not vote, they ensure youth protection goals are met. The three Venturers on the BOR approve applicants by majority (not unanimous) vote. Committee members augment Advisors on trips and at camp to provide the required depth of leadership. The Committee Secretary posts Committee minutes to the Crew Web Site just like the minutes written by the Venturers. The Committee Treasurer works with the Venturing Treasurer and the Advisor to keep the Committee aware of Crew funds.

The Chartered Organizational Representative (COR) is selected by the Institutional Head to adjust the Venturing Program to the desires of the Chartering Organization. We are fortunate to be chartered to a Fire Station that supports us as a service to the community. There is essentially no adjustment required because the Chartering Organization does not really have expectations of the Crew other than it represent them well and serve our community. In our case, the COR is also a valued member of our Crew Committee. CORs are not required to serve as Committee members but they are allowed to register in both capacities if both they and the Committee wish them to.



Crew President Awards National Youth Leadership Society to Liam



Elisabeth receives RANGER

The Institutional Head (IH) serves as the overall sponsor of the Crew. The Crew Charter application bears the signature of the IH. While generally not involved in day to day Crew operations, the IH has the vision and resources to ensure adequate sponsorship of the Crew. In our case, the Crew occasionally serves at functions at the fire department but we meet at a church and generally do not impinge on Fire Department facilities or resources. We are essentially self-supporting.

A Crew becomes large because of successful program. It stays large because it develops a successful organization without losing the program. Youth leadership is challenging! It requires a lot of nurturing, mentoring and training. Crew 27 has 57 Venturers at present. We are sending 18 to NYLT this summer. At the end of the summer, only 9 of the 57 Venturers on the roster now will not have completed NYLT. At present, about half of the Crew are NYLT graduates. We expect to top 60 members before summer camp and will probably be over 65 by the end of the summer.

# Large Crews OPERATION

By Pete Mapes, NCAC Crew 27 Associate Advisor

What sort of adult support is required for a Crew of nearly 60 Venturers? We have seven active Associate Advisors and an Advisor. Of these eight, four are women and four are men. Another Associate Advisor is out of the country presently with the Peace Corps. At a minimum, a large Crew needs a principle Advisor and an Associate Advisor for each Mini-Crew. The Crew Committee has nine regular participants and fifteen registered members. All of these people contribute their time to support the youth and almost none of them want to 'run' the program for the youth. The essential positions are the Committee Chair and the Treasurer. It is really nice if an adult can work with the Quartermaster. Some other handy skills to have on the adult staff are climbing, shooting, caving, SCUBA, sailing, medicine (camp physicals for Venturers or Adults without access to medical care, first aid instruction & mentoring medically inclined Venturers), archery, hunting, backpacking, cooking, swimming/lifesaving & COPE. We don't have all of these but can usually find someone to 'borrow' when we need them. The ability to borrow is really enhanced by regular attendance of some of the Advisors at Roundtables and District Committee meetings.

I hope this article provides some help for those working with Venturing Crews. This isn't 'The' way to do it, I'm sure there are many other highly successful systems for organizing a large Crew. It isn't lost on me that we have had huge success with principles laid down by Sir Robert Baden-Powell a hundred and nine years ago. Talk about someone with Vision!



MiniCrew A



MiniCrew B



Crew 27  
MiniCrews



MiniCrew C

MiniCrew D

## Pete Mapes

Our author is the founding advisor of Crew 27 who served in that capacity for over 6 years. With the help of a committed committee and well trained associate advisors, the Crew 27 adults have been able to empower a completely youth led Crew with massive program opportunities and a uniquely effective organization. It is now the largest Crew in the fourth largest Council in the BSA. Pete is a retired Air Force Pilot Physician who served as a Command Pilot in B-52s & T-37s while simultaneously serving as a Chief Flight Surgeon (a credentialed and privileged doctor). He was on active military duty for 38 years. Pete is Wood Badge Trained and holds the Scouter's Key as a Venturing Advisor as well at the Distinguished Eagle Scout Award, Silver Beaver & District Award of Merit. He and his wife have three grown up children, both daughters were Venturers and hold Girl Scout Gold Awards, their son was also a Venturer and is an Eagle Scout.

# Large Crews

## DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP SKILLS

By Pete Mapes, NCAC Crew 27 Associate Advisor

Leaders are not born. Plain and simple, there it is. There is nature (genetics) and there is nurture (experience) but no one is born to be a leader. It doesn't happen that way.

First of all, a leader has to want to lead. Humans do not usually follow people who have no desire to serve as leaders. That being said, there are two types of leaders: formal leaders occupy an office that places a mantle of leadership upon them – a Crew President is a good example of a 'formal' leader; informal leaders have no formal office – they have influence. People follow informal leaders because what they communicate makes sense to them. Many informal leaders go on to become formal leaders. A Venturer who takes initiative to rally the MiniCrew to start dinner when not assigned as the 'cook' or the leader of the MiniCrew is an informal leader – probably motivated by hunger. Informal leaders organize tasks they are not responsible for when the responsible people are not getting the job done or not getting it done to the liking of the informal leader(s). Alternatively, informal leaders influence formal leaders in a certain direction and get the formal leaders to change course or perform differently. This can be for better, or for worse, but it is usually different than if they had not become involved. Motivations of formal and informal leaders are usually different – Advisors need to understand this.

Venturing has a continuum of leadership training (See: <http://www.scouting.org/filestore/training/pdf/BSAYLTContinuum.pdf>) and it begins shortly after joining a Crew. You would not expect a brand new Venturer to be able to do the menu, scheduling and coordination to pull off a complicated outing without any guidance. The Venturer needs training, experience & practice. Let's start with training:



A good day at the Isaak Walton League Range for Crew 27

For most Venturers, their first leadership training is the 'Crew Officer Orientation.' This 40 minute CD goes over the roles of Crew Officers as they work together to plan a tier III outing for their Crew. By the end of the CD, Venturers should understand the roles of the Crew Officers. The CD is pretty well done. It is the first step on the Venturing Leadership Continuum. At about the same time that they watch the Crew Officer Orientation, Venturers should watch Personal Safety Training (PST). PST sets the bar for establishing a safe environment in the Crew, it shows where lines of acceptable and unacceptable behavior are drawn. This is essential information for future venturing Leaders. PST consists of four modules

covering Internet Safety, Harassment, and Date Rape & Suicide. Some Advisors are uncomfortable with the topics but they need to be covered in their entirety. Parents should be able to watch the videos too but probably not at the same time as the Venturers. The Venturers should discuss the ramifications of the behaviors portrayed. Our Crew shows PST annually.

# Large Crews

## DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP SKILLS

By Pete Mapes, NCAC Crew 27 Associate Advisor

We have the DVDs but it is also available on line through You Tube: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y\\_L7jEeFvFI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y_L7jEeFvFI) (for sexual harassment & rape prevention); <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FzhvIafXYV8> (for suicide prevention); <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mmMGweI2BiE> (for internet safety).

These are all very important topics that need to be put out there. Some of the Venturers may be directly affected in their lives and everyone needs to understand them. Venturers who reach their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, and all adults, need to do Venturing Youth Protection Training (YPT). This training is accomplished on line and the Venturers need their Scout Numbers to establish their training accounts. It is a good idea for them to print out and turn in their completion certificates to an advisor. The certificates are valid for 2 years should be kept

on file until they expire. YPT is the same course adult Venturing volunteers need to complete before BSA will accept their applications. YPT takes about 30 minutes to complete at a computer.

The next step in the Youth Leadership Continuum is Introduction to Leadership Skills (for Crews) also known as ILS(C). This course is taught by Venturers in the Crew setting although it can be offered in other venues as well. For instance, our Council offers it at the University of Scouting each year. It is a good course and introduces Venturers to fundamental skills like delegation, scheduling and planning. It runs 6 to 8 hours in length and has a pretty solid curriculum. If you are interested, you can



Crew 27 at Fort Michelimackinac, MI

see the facilitator guide at: <http://www.scouting.org/filestore/training/pdf/511-013WB.pdf> I recommend that your Venturers take the course once before they try to teach it. Teaching the course is a Summit requirement. Taking the course is a Discovery requirement. Venturers love patches – at least most seem to. There presently isn't a patch for completing ILS(C) but our Crew still awards the VLST patch from many years ago when the Venturers complete ILS(C). VLST was the forerunner of ILS(C).



Crew 27 Flag Detail at Goshen Scout Reservation's Camp Bowman

# Large Crews

## DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP SKILLS

By Pete Mapes, NCAC Crew 27 Associate Advisor

Crew 27 really tries to have everyone take ILS(C) in their first year of Venturing so they can attend National Youth Leadership Training (NYLT) the first year they are in the Crew. ILS(C) is a prerequisite for NYLT. We get about 85 to 90% of our new Venturers to NYLT in the first year. NYLT is taught by most Councils and it only opened to Venturers in our Council in 2005. Venturing attendees are in the minority since most of the spots in each course are taken by Boy Scouts. That being said, the course has much to offer Venturers. NYLT condenses a month or more of the Scouting Program into a very intense week and mixes it with formal leadership skill training in communication, scheduling, conflict resolution, teamwork, and a host of other worthwhile subjects. It teaches leaders what they need to be, what they need to know, and what they need to do. This is one of those courses that the Boy Scouts has to offer that is really unparalleled in any other organization accessible to youth. It is Wood Badge for teens and very valuable to the Crew as a whole. Not everyone who attends NYLT seems to 'get it' right away – sometimes it takes a year or two to sink in. The most painful thing to watch is a youth leader in Venturing trying to perform without having taken it. You can look over the syllabus by going to: [http://www.people.vcu.edu/~albest/woodbadge/NYLT\\_syllabus.pdf](http://www.people.vcu.edu/~albest/woodbadge/NYLT_syllabus.pdf) One helpful hint, since the majority of NYLT participants are male Boy Scouts, please talk to your Council to ensure that any NYLT Patrol with a female participant in it has at least one other female participant in it. If the number of female participants at NYLT is odd, this may require three young women in a NYLT Patrol. NYLT uses the buddy system and it is just wrong to have a young man accompany a young woman to the latrine as her 'buddy.' Trust me, this will be an issue with your young women if you don't act to ensure they have female buddies!



Crew 27 heads to Ohio for a summer adventure

At the conclusion of NYLT, Crew 27 allows the graduates to wear either the 'Trained' strip or the new 'NYLT' strip on their left sleeve below their badge of office. At this point we consider them to have met the bar as trained leaders. This is not the end of their leadership training. We encourage Venturers to sign up to attend the National Advanced Youth Leadership Experience (NAYLE). Taught at Philmont, Northern Tier and The Summit in the summer and at Sea Base in the spring, NAYLE is derived from the syllabus used to train rangers at Philmont (employees, not awardees – we always capitalize the RANGER Rank). While the syllabus is

not available on line, each of our Venturers who has attended has loved it and felt that it was very valuable. The course is taught outside and involves all kinds of advanced, skill based problem solving exercises.

# Large Crews

## DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP SKILLS

By Pete Mapes, NCAC Crew 27 Associate Advisor

One exercise, for instance, is a mass casualty response. To get specific information about the availability of NAYLE for your Venturers, Sea Scouts or Explorers, go to: <http://www.scouting.org/scoutsource/BoyScouts/Resources/NAYLE.aspx>



Crew 27 helps teach Introduction to Outdoor Leadership Skills

Our Crew has one additional core leadership training that we offer in conjunction with the American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary – Boy's State & Girl's State. This opportunity is only available to Venturers who are completing their Junior Year in High School. The application cycle begins in the late fall of each year and is complete by March of the junior year. Mandatory orientation training is imposed on Girl's State candidates in April of each year and if they miss it, they don't get to go. That training is usually four hours on a weekend

and is offered a dozen times around the State. Applicants DO NOT pay for the Girl's/Boy's State experience. Your Crew needs to raise the money to support them and donate it to the American Legion or the American Legion Auxiliary through a local Post. Cost is roughly \$300/attendee and the program is a week long. Boy's/Girl's State is always early in the summer, usually late June, before camp, because each of the forty-nine participating States send the top two participants, elected by their peers to Boy's/Girl's Nation in Washington D.C. in July. That is also done at no cost to the attendees but if your Venturers are selected to attend, the Legion picks up the cost and they will get to meet the President in the White House – it is a huge deal! All of our Venturers who have attended Boy's/Girl's State have considered it fun and very valuable!



Crew 27 Honors the Flag at Goshen Scout Reservation

Now for the optional leadership training opportunities! Let's start with Kodiak. The Kodiak course is a national course taught at a local level. It must be carefully planned, about three months in advance and materials must be gathered. The course requires national approval so there are some hoops to jump through before you teach it. In addition, whoever teaches it must be a trained facilitator for Kodiak so getting the facilitator trained is the first step. Once the hoops are jumped, the Kodiak course is an excellent addition to a Crew Tier 3 adventure and is designed to be taught on the trail. Go to this site to look over the facilitators guide and syllabus: <http://www.scouting.org/filestore/training/pdf/Kodiak%20Challenge%20FINAL%202011%20-%20Item%20Number%20511-014.pdf>

[www.scouting.org/filestore/training/pdf/Kodiak%20Challenge%20FINAL%202011%20-%20Item%20Number%20511-014.pdf](http://www.scouting.org/filestore/training/pdf/Kodiak%20Challenge%20FINAL%202011%20-%20Item%20Number%20511-014.pdf)

# Large Crews

## DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP SKILLS

By Pete Mapes, NCAC Crew 27 Associate Advisor

The next optional course in the leadership continuum is the Powder-Horn Course. Powder Horn is a resource management course for high adventure activities. It is usually taught in Council over one or two weekends. The facilitators guide is available at: [http://www.scouting.org/filestore/training/pdf/Powderhorn\\_syllabus.pdf](http://www.scouting.org/filestore/training/pdf/Powderhorn_syllabus.pdf). Everyone who takes it comes back enthused with a new awareness of high adventure options and equipment sources as well as resources for training and implementation of high adventure programs. Our Venturers who have taken it have really enjoyed it and come back full of ideas. Powderhorn is very applicable to earning the RANGER Rank as it specifically addresses resources needed to accomplish RANGER core and elective requirements!

There are other courses as well; Sea Scouts offers the SEAL course. Exploring has national and regional meetings usually divided by career interest area. Some Councils have some excellent leadership courses that are not recognized nationally. Many of these are taught by individuals who specialize in staff development and executive leadership training. They are offered to Venturers at a fraction of the cost charged in the professional marketplace. One more course, usually taken by adults, but open to Venturers in most Councils is Back Country Outdoor Leader Skills (BCOLS). This is a 'how to' course that is really outstanding for leaders and Venturers about to get off the beaten track. It surveys equipment, reviews skills and provides some practical experience, usually over two weekends.

The foregoing has explained how you get trained leaders, now we are going to switch subjects and move to how your youth leaders gain experience & practice in leadership.



Presenting the Colors at our Sponsors Board Meeting



Popcorn Delivery to La Jolla SSN-701 at Norfolk Naval Base, VA

Baden-Powell knew that leadership is best developed through training and practice! In Scouting, his cardinal rule was: "Never do anything a child can do, for in so doing you rob them of the opportunity." As an adult in Venturing, the Boy Scouts has placed great trust in your leadership ability and in your judgement – your great task then is to use your superior judgement to know when not to exercise your superior leadership! How is that for a conundrum?

# Large Crews

## DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP SKILLS

By Pete Mapes, NCAC Crew 27 Associate Advisor

Venturing is a representative democracy of the executive. We don't have a legislature, it would be too cumbersome. We shouldn't need a judiciary, but when we do, the senior youth leaders can usually manage to orchestrate it under the auspices of the Scout Oath and Law. Instead, we elect our executives and allow them to construct a team that will provide effective leadership to execute the mission:

Venturing is a youth development program of the Boy Scouts of America for young men and women who are 14 years of age OR 13 years of age and have completed the eighth grade and under 21 years of age. Venturing's purpose is to provide positive experiences to help young people mature and to prepare them to become responsible and caring adults, with an emphasis in adventure, leadership, personal growth, and service.

We accomplish our mission by training young people in leadership and organizational skills, then let them practice those by planning, organizing and carrying out activities in a variety of fields requiring various degrees of planning and also by making opportunities available to them at a regional, national and international level. For access to a wealth of Venturing information, look at: <http://www.scouting.org/scoutsource/Venturing.aspx>



Nobody stacks chairs like Crew 27 at Fort McHenry



Crew 27 lines up at NYLT

In short, we train them to carry out a fun program and then let them practice by doing it. In the process they will encounter lots of the 'rocks and shoals' identified by Robert Baden-Powell in many of his writings and they will use the fundamental ideals of Scouting, the Oath and the Law to overcome them. In the process they will develop into capable, compassionate people who care about others and the world around them – Wow!

Elections are essential. Everyone needs to know they are happening and everyone needs to be given an opportunity to participate, both by running and voting. One issue unique to a large Crew is that the position of Crew President seems to be a dauntingly large responsibility – so

much so that it scares many potentially good people away. A key role of the adults in Venturing is to bend over backwards to publicly and privately support the Crew President so that others will not be afraid to ascend to the position.

# **Large Crews**

## **DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP SKILLS**

By Pete Mapes, NCAC Crew 27 Associate Advisor

The opportunity to be Crew President of an active Venturing Crew with over fifty members is a tremendous executive exposure for a high school student. I've watched seven of them grow and develop in the role and the role changed six of them for the better and made them more capable than they were when they started serving in it. The same can be said of nearly all of our officers. The only ones who don't benefit are the ones who don't make an effort. I watched a newly elected Crew President get simultaneously elected to be Senior Patrol Leader of his Troop. He neglected his Crew duties until the rest of the Crew felt it necessary to ask him to step down. His one contribution to the Crew was appointing a very capable Vice President for Admin who continued to run things effectively and gave the Crew a great year as he took over the Presidency. The most important skill for a Crew President in a large Crew is the ability to delegate and then follow up to ensure that what was delegated is actually being done.

Each of the Crew Officers, whether elected or appointed, has essential functions to carry out and they must accomplish those in a timely manner to support the Crew. The accomplishment of their functions is also important because they grow through doing them. They have to show up, communicate, cooperate and perform to get their jobs done. When they do well, hardly anyone notices; but when they don't do, everyone notices! Advisors need to praise steadfast performance in public so the youth know their efforts are recognized and appreciated. The mother of an active duty Army general I am acquainted with



Crew 27 sights in at the Isaak Walton League Range



Lilly with Venturing and Girl Scout Gold Awards

always told him to never miss an opportunity to say "thank you." That advice is very important in Venturing too; both to reward the person who accomplished something and to incentivize the people who watched them accomplish something.

# Large Crews

## DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP SKILLS

By Pete Mapes, NCAC Crew 27 Associate Advisor

It is really important for Advisors to avoid being directive. Save being directive for intervening on the behalf of safety and back it up with 'The Guide To Safe Scouting.' Advisors should allow Venturers to disagree with them and Venturers should feel safe in doing so. Venturers have to learn to make a call and have enough faith in themselves that they 'stick to their guns.' Most of the time, different ways of doing things are 'happy to glad' and have zero long range effect – let the Venturers experiment, even to the point of getting it wrong, remember 'controlled failure' is important. Just keep it fun and be able to laugh at what happens – not at the Venturers who led to the situation.

The more active your Crew's program is, the more experience your Venturers get at leading. The concept of an 'Activity Chair' is a great opportunity for any Venturer to take on a leadership challenge from organizing a simple day event to cooperating with several other Venturers to create a week-long adventure. The challenges are variable to suit the abilities of the



Crew 27 at the 2013 National Scout Jamboree  
The first NSJ with Venturing Participants

people taking them on and a wise Crew President will encourage the VP-Program to keep in close contact with the Activity Chairs to ensure that the planning and execution of the program stays on track. A key point – on the activity itself, the Activity Chair is in charge, not the Crew President, not the VP-Program, not the Advisor. There have been times when this concept has not been clearly understood by a Crew President and that has led to some 'storming' on activities. Fully trained Crew Presidents who have at least been through NYLT will probably not make this error. Note that participating in activities is a requirement for achieving each Venturing Award level, getting educated about how to set up

an activity is a requirement for Discovery, planning activities is a requirement for Pathfinder and mentoring someone who is planning an activity is a requirement for Summit.

Outside of the Crew, leadership opportunities abound for Venturers who are interested. Scouting Councils frequently have Venturing Officer Associations (VOA) than need interested Venturers to lead and organize them. Each Boy Scout Region is divided into Areas and each Area has a VOA made up of Venturers from the Area's Councils. The four Boy Scout Regions also have VOA's led by youth who serve as Regional Presidents and Regional Staff. Finally, BSA Headquarters hosts the National VOA made up of the four Regional Presidents, a National President and a National Staff.

# Large Crews

## DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP SKILLS

By Pete Mapes, NCAC Crew 27 Associate Advisor



Crew 27 at John Henry's death location in WV during the 2013 National Scout Jamboree

There are different suspenses for different positions but Venturers may apply for positions in VOAs at different levels in the late winter and early spring of each year. Those selected are inducted into their leadership roles in May of each year. The only caveat is that they must remain under the age of 21 for their entire term. These jobs are great opportunities to serve and to grow Venturing. To learn about how to apply for various offices, go to: <http://www.scouting.org/scoutsource/Venturing.aspx> . At this site you can download an application for an upper level Venturing position or to learn about standard operating practices above the Crew level. Make sure you meet all suspenses. National positions

are chosen first, followed by the Region, then the Area, then the Council. Some Councils have Service Area or District VOAs as well and they may run independently of the standard operating procedures published on line.

So, there you have it, an outline of the Venturing Leadership continuum and some thoughts on the leadership experiences that Venturers can gain. I'm sure there are lots of other effective ideas out there among those of you reading this article – please don't be bashful! Write an article for the Forum and share you views and experience. It will make all of our programs stronger.



Crew 27 at the Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village in Detroit, MI



Water Hazards at the 2013 National Scout Jamboree

# Large Crews RECRUITING

By Pete Mapes, NCAC Crew 27 Associate Advisor

A principle reason for the regular demise of Venturing Crews is a failure to recruit. It usually works like this – someone in a Scout Troop gets an idea to form a Crew. That part is easy, everybody loves a new Crew – District Executives love them because they count in their metrics, Chartering organizations love them because they forward their mission. Members love them because they get to have fun with their friends. In four years, high school ends, the Crew hasn't really grown, everybody leaves and the Crew disappears. These events play out year after year in Scouting.

How do you avoid the sinusoidal life and death of Crews? The answer is simple – Recruit. The problem is that recruiting is not an end in itself. The ability of a Crew to bring in new members is directly related to its ability to create program that people cannot get anywhere else and the friendliness of its environment. Simply put, recruiting hangs on two things – Program and Friendliness. Having excellent program is not enough though, you have to communicate that you have an excellent program – 'marketing', so to speak. Your best communicators are your Venturers! They are there because they are having fun and the Advisors are letting them do it! They will share their experiences with their friends and their friends will come 'check it out.' Word of mouth is your best recruiting tool when implemented by enthusiastic members – it is their peer group you want. The operating equation here is Program + Friendliness = Fun!



Crew 27 and Reenactors take aim at  
Fort Frederick MD

Public exposure is your next best recruiting tool! Doing a service project, too dirty to wear the field uniform? Got a t-shirt that advertises your Crew? – and I don't mean a little tiny Venturing insignia on the left breast – I'm talking about a whopping, easy to read, shameless advertisement for your Crew all over the back of the shirt! This should be readable from 100 feet away – don't make people guess who you are! Volunteer for flag details; show up at Council and District events. Set up a table at Program Launch for your District. Did you know that Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts frequently have siblings of Venturing age and no one ever hears about us? If you are there at the event with some Venturers, particularly some of

the young women in your Crew, people will come over and ask you questions. Have a flyer available with your Crew information to pass out. Have a web site. List the web site on your flyer. Check ours out, go to: [kensington27.mytroop.us](http://kensington27.mytroop.us) Note that on the front of our web site we have articles people can download and read about our activities that are written by our Venturers. Nothing is as powerful for teen-to-teen communication as the words of one teenager to another. There are no articles written by Advisors on the site. Advisor articles don't recruit anyone – we're boring!

# Large Crews RECRUITING

By Pete Mapes, NCAC Crew 27 Associate Advisor

Community service opportunities abound and are a great stage for recruiting. Organizations like the American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary are strong supporters of Scouting as are many churches and other community organizations. Since service is a core competency of Venturing, our Crews should be out there serving with regularity. When we do this, it is a marketing opportunity and we need to take advantage of it. Uniforms, posters, flyers, conversation – all means of spreading the word.



Lila, Brooke, Lisa, Julie, Lily, Lillianne chatting at Timberline



Introduction to Leadership Skills—Crews Games 2016

A word of caution. We've encountered a recurrent theme that will waste your time a bit. If your program is really impressive, it draws parents. The parents think it would be a really good thing for their children (usually daughters) to get involved – they seem to be less paternalistic about their sons. It goes like this, the parent gets really enthused about the program but the child is nowhere in sight. Finally the child is brought by to sign up and does. In our crew they get a uniform, a Venturing Handbook, insignia, a Boy Scout Field Book, and a Crew t-shirt. They show up for a few meetings, never go on an activity, and then we never see them again – sometimes they bring the uniform and books back. What just happened? Teenagers are in the process of separating from their parents – we all know this. If a parent thinks something would be really good for a teenager, the teenager is almost sure to rebel. In honor of one of our most famous cases of this, we call it the 'CARA' syndrome. The bottom line is that unless the child is a single child or the parent is a helicopter parent in full control, the child will never really become a functional Venturer. Don't feel like this is a failing of your Crew or people – it was a family issue in the family of the teenager exhibiting the CARA syndrome.

# Large Crews RECRUITING

By Pete Mapes, NCAC Crew 27 Associate Advisor

So the helicopter parent issue needs to be addressed as well. Helicopter parents significantly detract from the Venturing program. Having any adult in a MiniCrew campsite or a Crew meeting while the Venturers are doing their thing is a bad idea. The campsite or meeting needs to be visible to the adults to comply with two deep leadership but we should not be in the process unless needed for instruction or safety and usually, in a well-developed Crew, there is a Venturer to handle both of those issues. New Crews or Crews with all inexperienced Venturers on an outing may need a bit more direct supervision but adults need to get the Venturers qualified and back away to an observation post to allow the program to fully actualize itself. So what do you do when confronted with a helicopter parent? Explain the program and gently lead them out of the fray. This will be hard on them but it will be harder on the Crew if you don't do it. We have a very impressive Venturer who has Summit, RANGER and Eagle – he can gently escort a helicopter parent away from the fray but it takes an adult to keep them from going back. Sit the helicopter parent down where they can watch from a distance, just like the Advisors do and teach them some Scoutcraft, or, if they know some Scoutcraft, have them teach you – but keep them busy so they don't obsess on their kid quite as much. They are not bad people; they are just damaged in a way that is harmful to Venturing so treat them with love and understanding. Most will eventually get it and if they don't, they'll usually leave of their own volition.



New Crew 27 recruits at  
Introduction to Leadership Skills—Crews



Scouting Family Recognizes their new  
RANGER

# Large Crews RECRUITING

By Pete Mapes, NCAC Crew 27 Associate Advisor

The regular composition of articles about our events has been a significant recruiting tool. Now-a-days, when confronted with a phone call or email from a prospective Venturer, I direct them to the web site and ask them to read up on our activities and see if they think they would like them. If the answer is yes, we have a new Venturer. Articles written by youth are a priceless gift and a great recruiting tool. You may need to do some editing, but the paybacks are immense. Your Council may want to publish some articles in their periodicals or post them to their web sites. 'The Forum' would love to have them – send them to [rmonto47@gmail.com](mailto:rmonto47@gmail.com) to have them reviewed for publication. 'The Forum' is an awesome opportunity to share what you Crew does on a National scale! Your Venturers and you should subscribe to 'The FORUM' as well. We look forward to it every month!

Annual end of summer school activity fairs are great places to turn up with a Venturing table. You need to target incoming 8<sup>th</sup> graders and invite them to bring a parent and come as guests on your activities. When they turn 14 or finish 8<sup>th</sup> grade you can sign them up. Again, your program is the key to this technique. You have to have fun stuff to invite them to.



Crew 27 takes a break at a scenic lock on the C & O Canal



Crew 27 Philmont shakedown at Sugarloaf Mtn

As you arrive at the end of winter each year, you should be looking toward the 'graduating' 8<sup>th</sup> graders as potential members, snag them before they get wrapped up in high school clubs and activities and you'll have them throughout high school.

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Recruiting always needs to be in the back of your mind. The better your program, the less effort you need to put into recruiting. If you seem to be working really hard to recruit, relax, generate some awesome program, and your recruiting woes will vaporize. It shouldn't be lost on you that you have a limited amount of time and energy. The most effective use of your time and energy is program development and organization, not recruiting. Recruiting then becomes a product of why you got involved in Venturing to begin with and that makes it much easier. If you engage the eighth graders without a schedule out a year to show them where they would go if they joined, they will probably head elsewhere. If your program development produced a captivating schedule, they will join if you market it.

To sum up:

- 1) Develop awesome program
- 2) Market your awesome program
- 3) Take your Crew to places where you are likely to contact prospective members
- 4) Avoid program cancellations
- 5) Develop a solid organizational structure
- 6) Provide a clear path for leadership development and advancement
- 7) Have Fun!



Crew27at Fort Michelimackinac

Pete Mapes

Our author is the founding advisor of Crew 27 who served in that capacity for over 6 years. With the help of a committed committee and well trained associate advisors, the Crew 27 adults have been able to empower a completely youth led Crew with massive program opportunities and a uniquely effective organization. It is now the largest Crew in the fourth largest Council in the BSA. Pete is a retired Air Force Pilot Physician who served as a Command Pilot in B-52s & T-37s while simultaneously serving as a Chief Flight Surgeon (a credentialed and privileged doctor). He was on active military duty for 38 years. Pete is Wood Badge Trained and holds the Scouter's Key as a Venturing Advisor as well at the Distinguished Eagle Scout Award, Silver Beaver & District Award of Merit. He and his wife have three grown up children, both daughters were Venturers and hold Girl Scout Gold Awards, their son was also a Venturer and is an Eagle Scout.

# Large Crews

## Adult Support, the view from the Committee

By Nona I. Mapes, Crew 27 Committee Secretary

Crew 27 (of the Potomac District in the National Capital Area Council/082) started with only 5 Venturers and grew to over 60 registered Youth members in six years. Behind those initial 5 Venturers were 8 parents and 2 adult volunteers. The Crew now boasts nearly 70 registered Venturers and over 100 involved parents, including 30 registered adult members and several Youth Protection trained parents who are considering BSA membership as well.



Crew 27 on the porch of The Pack House in 2014 during their summer adventure trip to MI - "looking for Paul Bunyan"

A critical part of any Crew's success is that they must have their own dedicated adult support. If you try to economize by using one committee for two units or only adults who already strongly support another unit, there will be conflicting needs. Inevitably, one unit will become the loser unit and no-one wants to be in that Troop/Crew. Also, the Committee to a Crew is much more hands off than a Troop Committee and being patient and supportive while the Crew takes time to figure out their plans is a major skill the Crew Committee needs to learn as the Crew grows.

# Large Crews

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Crew 27 at their 'Hangar Party' summer adventure campout in southwestern Ohio in 2013 -  
"Native Americans"

Crews can become large when the adults support the Venturers and the program the Crew members create. Program is the key, if the Crew is doing things that appeal to youth in the area, they will want to become a part of it. It all starts with a Chartering Organization (CO) that does not restrict membership. Crew 27 went through two Chartering Organizations before they settled with a local Volunteer Fire Department that supported our version of "leave no Youth behind." The Crew shouldn't restrict membership either, anyone meeting age criteria and willing to try to follow the Scout Oath and Law should be welcome.

The original Key Three (Chartered Organizational Representative-COR, Advisor and Committee Chair) started with a few basic assumptions about how the Crew would function. Everyone was welcome to come learn how to have a great time while practicing living the Scout Oath and Law. If anyone finds that they don't want to try to follow the Scout Oath and Law on any given day, we remind them that they are volunteers and suggest that they can take some time off. They are also welcome to do an 'attitude adjustment' by taking some personal time to eat, rest or rehydrate. They can always connect with their parents and relocate to a place where they can do what they want. They are just as welcome to come back to the group any time they are happy to practice Venturing Ideals. Practicing choosing what you really want is a new skill for some.

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Crew 27 paddles Squam Lake, NH during their 2015 summer adventure to Vermont and New Hampshire

The Key three also wanted to make sure the youth understood they were valuable. All the parents are encouraged to take Youth Protection Training (Y-2) and adults are only allowed on outings as part of the Crew if they can show us they have taken it. The Crew allows Venturers to be driven by their parents but parents can only transport other Venturers if they are registered as adult leaders with the Crew who have completed Venturing YPT training. If not riding with their parents, Venturers may travel with registered and trained adult leaders who are either Advisors or Committee Members. Parents who are adult leaders and BSA members in other Scouting units are viewed the same way as our own Crew adult leadership once they demonstrate that they have completed Venturing YPT. This is because BSA Adult Leaders have agreed to allow BSA to do background checks just like those done on our Venturing adults so they meet our Crew standard for youth protection.

# **Large Crews**

## **Adult Support, the view from the Committee**

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**The Green Bank Radio Telescope during the Crew 27 2016 summer adventure to West Virginia - "Listening to the Stars"**

In Crew 27, all the guardians/parents that may be involved in Crew activities are put on our contact roster. The Crew has quarterly parent meetings where they are invited to assist at scheduled activities. Adults who wish to join the Crew start out as Committee members. They take Venturing Youth Protection Training when they apply to be BSA members and we try to help them get completely trained in the first 6 months after they join. For adults planning to stay on the Committee, this includes the Crew Committee Challenge. For those adults who want to move into operations as Associate Advisors, Advisor Training and Introduction to Outdoor Leadership Skills (IOLS) as well as the on line safety trainings: Weather Awareness, Climb Safely, Paddle Safely and Safe Swim Defense are in their futures. The Crew also invites adults seeking designation as Associate Advisors to complete American Red Cross Adult and Child CPR/AED and Community First Aid Training which is taught in the Crew by Crew adults who are also American Red Cross Instructors.

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**Whitewater at the 2013 National Scout Jamboree on the New River - First time Venturers at the NSJ!**

**For the monthly outings, we ask the Venturers to file a Tour Plan for every overnight trip. This ensures the committee meets its responsibility for making sure that the Venturers plan has enough adult resources including transportation, first aid, specialized safety training, and funding or contracts.**

**Especially in a Large Crew, you want to train the youth to keep themselves and each other safe. The Scout Oath and Law is a good start. The Crew has Red Cross Instructors in the crew who teach and certify all the youth and some of the adult members. You can also make sure every Venturer gets to review the Personal Safety Awareness for Venturers video at least once each year. This is particularly important if they are going to a large event like Scout camp or a Jamboree.**

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First Crew 27 Advisor - Pete; Second Crew 27 Advisor - Lisa

If your crew is inclusive you will find that not all the members can fund their own way without some type of support. Fundraising helps make sure funding is not a reason to stay home. With a large Crew there may be business or personal sponsors who help out. Popcorn and product sales can also help Venturers earn their own way or work as a team to meet the Crew needs. A little extra organization like scheduling a few well timed sales events at high volume traffic areas can make the effort well worth the time. Selling Scout approved products like popcorn can also support Council programs that the Crew relies on.

# **Large Crews**

## **Adult Support, the view from the Committee**

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**Crew 27 at the Antietam National Battlefield for the Luminaries in 2015 - We'll be back in 2016!**

**Committee service to a large Crew can be particularly rewarding. You can see the youth grow into caring, competent adults as they progress on their Venturing journey. To quote the Public Broadcasting Corporation, your time with the Venturers becomes "time well spent!"**

# **Large Crews Problem Parents in Venturing**

**By Pete Mapes**

This article has been in the back of my mind for a while and I think it is time to get it on paper. I'm sure any Advisor or Scoutmaster of a large Post, Crew or Troop has run into problem parents. What I'd like to try to do here is to provide a framework that provides some options and helps adult volunteers deal with problem parents without taking too much time away from their principal duties of providing Scouting to youth.

It is probably good to remind ourselves why we volunteer to be leaders. The principal goals of Venturing are to: learn to make ethical choices through the Scout Oath and Law; experience a program full of fun, challenge and adventure; become a skilled training and program resource; acquire skills; experience positive leadership from adult and youth leaders and be given opportunities to take leadership roles; and finally – to have a chance to learn and grow in a supportive, caring and fun environment. Did you know we were doing all of that?

I need to provide a small disclaimer here. I have been the lead Advisor for what has become the largest Venturing Crew in our Council for seven years and just become an Associate Advisor last January. The opinions I'm about to express are mine and not necessarily those of the Boy Scouts of America or any other organization. I offer them to give you a framework for dealing with 'problem parents' if you think you need the help, or are just interested in the subject. I'm a practicing physician and this probably colors the lens I look through. I've been an adult volunteer in Scouting for just over 25 years and spent ten years of my youth as a member of Scouting.

Let's start by defining a problem parent. As far as I am concerned, a parent creates a problem when they: interfere with the Scouting program (as identified by the goals in paragraph two above), neglect or abuse their child, take an unreasonable amount of time away from adult leaders so that the leaders cannot do their jobs as effectively as they should be able to, or behave in a way that is deleterious to Scouting. Everyone has their moments but problem parents exhibit a consistent pattern of behavior that interferes with the goals of Scouting.

## **The Helicopter Parent**

By far, the most common problem is the helicopter parent. This parent can take several different forms. One form is the parent who refuses to allow their child to attend any activities unless they are also present. This parent can exhibit a great deal of selfishness that can be very harmful for the group. For instance, buying their child ice cream or bringing pillows or other special items from home that the other youth do not have access to. Most (but not all) helicopter parents are concerned solely with their child and are oblivious to how their actions appear to other participants. The issue can become extreme when the helicopter parent is well to do financially and focuses their resources solely on their child. Additional complicating factors include the parent who packs their child's equipment for trips. This behavior robs the child of even being able to exercise personal responsibility for themselves, much less anyone else.

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How to deal with this? A reasonable parent is the easiest to deal with. These are generally the parents of only children and they don't even realize they are hovering. A simple explanation of how the Venturing program works will allow them to see the wisdom of it and they will back away on cue. Harder to deal with is the parent with a personality disorder. Lots of common issues amplify helicopter parenting. These include overprotectiveness due to an abusive parent (frequently no longer on the scene but still a potential threat), empty nest syndrome where the major support structure of the parent in question revolves around the child(ren) and the child(ren) are growing up enough that the inevitable departure is foreseeable, and a degree of obsessive-compulsive disorder in the parent making them unable to allow any 'controlled failure' so necessary in the Venturing Program. In these more difficult cases it may not be possible for the child to participate without disrupting the experience of the other Venturers. I have never had to purposely disenroll a Venturer or a parent from the Crew. In most cases, the parent senses that things are not working out and departs the scene on their own after failing to exercise control. Unfortunately, they take the child with them and the youth loses out on the Venturing experience.

One of the most severe cases of helicopter parenting I experienced involved a parent who volunteered to serve on the committee (Crew 27 requires that any adult starts their service on the Crew Committee and serves there for at least six months before being considered for an Advisor position). The particular individual would come to Crew Committee meetings with her own agenda and continually derail the formal meeting agenda with her own issues. In the end, the Crew Committee Chairperson gave her a letter removing her from the committee based on the fact that they didn't seem to work effectively together. She would allow one of her children to attend meetings but not weekend events and the other child was simply not showing up. Since the absent child held a Crew Officer position, I advised mom that no credit would be given for advancement for wearing the patch and not participating. Sure enough, four months later, mom demands that I sign the Venturer's handbook for holding a leadership position. I reminded her of our earlier discussion and that ended that. The family was with us for a year and left of their own volition. Great kids, problematic mother, enabling father. Difficult situation all around. The kids seem to be doing better in another unit.

The next case has repeated itself several times. There is an abusive, non-custodial parent out there somewhere and the custodial parent is nearly always present watching the child. Understandable in the circumstance but the watching parent needs to pull their weight and avoid interfering with the development of the youth. Inevitably the supervising parent is unable to muster the resources to allow for an effective program and the family usually departs of their own volition. This is really a shame because the youth in question usually seems to get a huge amount of value from the Venturing program. I think the best way to deal with this is to be understanding, explain what is happening to the parent and hope that they 'get it.' Hasn't worked yet, most of the parents in this case are badly scarred by the abuse and that colors their judgment and capability to interact effectively.

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In yet another example of helicopter parenting, we see a youth in a degree of revolt against the parent. In every case, this has been a young woman revolting against her mother. We call this the 'CARA' syndrome after one of its most well known practitioners in the Crew. At any rate, Mom locates this awesome Venturing program for her daughter, drags her along and signs her up. That is the last we see of the young woman. Interestingly, all of the young men with similar circumstances have come around and become great Venturers. Frequently they have dropped out of Boy Scouting and several have gone on to earn Eagle in Venturing. Not so much the young women. 80% of them end up dropping out within two months. The warning sign for this issue is a call from a parent seeking information about the Crew. Now, when I get these, I ask to speak to the potential Venturer directly. I'm a pretty good sales person for Scouting so if they appear reticent after the contact initiated by their parent, I become suspicious of the circumstances. I think the best way to cope with this scenario is to keep an open mind and continue to be welcoming. Just don't be too hopeful of a recruit if the prospective Venturer is being dragged in by their parent, particularly if she is a young woman.

## **The Abusive Parent**

Fortunately, this parent is relatively rare, rarer than the neglectful parent in my experience. I've run across two types of this behavior. In the first case, the parent hit her child hard for properly documenting advancement in a Venturing Handbook. The corporal punishment was way out of proportion to the alleged 'sin' and the 'sin' was actually completely appropriate behavior. Since the episode happened in front of me and in my own kitchen, I had some latitude not usually available to Venturing Leaders. The only question in my mind was "do I report this to child protective services or not?" This was the first episode of physical abuse I had confronted with the family in question. Maybe I should have reported it immediately. I didn't, I told the offending parent that she would not batter her daughter on my property and that I thought this physical bullying was extremely reprehensible behavior. She started to defend herself verbally then acceded to the fact that her behavior had been inappropriate. With a public apology in front of the aggrieved child and no permanent physical damage, I was slightly more confident that the situation was under control. I did report the incident to the Committee and recommend that this particular parent not transport any youth other than her own and that she not be relied upon as an adult in computing chaperone ratios for events.

I mentioned a second instance of physical abuse by a parent. A much different situation. In this case the parent confronted me to inquire if I had reported him to child protective services for abuse. Since I had not observed this parent being abusive, I replied in the negative. This divorced dad had custody of his kids and had at least two who would get attention any way they could, good or bad. Apparently, the screaming at the kids and corporal incidents had risen to the point where the neighbors had become concerned and reported the family. Somehow the dad got the idea that I had reported but I actually had no knowledge of the problem. My response was to go back to the committee chair and report the issue. The committee acted as they had in the earlier case, recommended that the parent drive only their own child(ren) and no one else. The dad has gotten some anger control counselling and is doing much better but it took the threat of losing custody to make it happen.

# **Large Crews Problem Parents in Venturing**

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Whether it be a momentary loss of control or simple anger control and inept parenting, physical abuse presents a real and present danger to Venturers and once a leader suspects or confronts an issue, a report to other adults in the program and to child protective services is warranted. It isn't our position to judge the parent or the situation, we just need to make sure it gets investigated. In accordance with BSA YPT policy, a report to the Council Scout Executive is also required.

## **Parental Drug Abuse**

This hasn't raised its head often, but what do you do when you have reason to suspect parental drug abuse? In the few times I've had to deal with this the answer has been to prevent the parent in question from driving and to ensure that they understand that any drug use at a Scouting event will result in an immediate police complaint. Make sure the Committee knows and concurs with whatever tact you take here. The children of drug abusers need Scouting very badly; it is important to keep them in the program. Their contacts at Scouts and in School define 'normal' for them since their parental contact is decidedly abnormal. You may need to make some heroic transportation arrangements and parents who use drugs may be short on discretionary income to support the Scouting program of their kids. This may require some generosity from other families in the Crew or from you if you are able to help them. The deal I make with them is that I will pay for their activities if they show up. If they are a No Show, they need to pay. This prevents last minute excuses and no-shows.

## **Financial Insolvency**

It isn't a crime to be poor. Fully a quarter of the 60+ Venturers in our Crew are from way below the poverty level. Many are immigrants who are here because their families won the 'Immigration Lottery' the USA runs that brings in 10,000 families a year. If you don't find a way to help them, they just are not going to be able to participate. Don't throw it all on the parents, they are struggling to put bread on the table and do not have discretionary time, just like they do not have discretionary money. Product sales can be a help here to allow the Venturers to earn their way to events. Our Crew has sold over \$200K in popcorn in the last seven years but this year we won't be selling because Council has reduced the support they provide to the program. One of our parents runs some summer businesses at swimming pools and provides Venturers with \$50/day if they help. The work isn't hard but the pay is pretty low. The good news is that 14 year olds can participate. One of our Venturers earned \$1,350 helping at the pool to help pay for going to the 23<sup>rd</sup> World Scout Jamboree in Japan last summer. Check with your parents for employment opportunities. See if you can offer those to your low income Venturers. Again, be careful, some Venturers in the lower income brackets have child care responsibilities for sibs and other issues that preclude earning much money. They may also need help with transportation support. In those cases, garnering some Crew support from generous, well to do families can make a huge difference. I have one family who repeatedly tells me that they can't afford gas to get their kids to Venturing meetings and activities.

# **Large Crews Problem Parents in Venturing**

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I always counter with, “come on down and I’ll buy you a tankful.” Most of the time this works. I’m particularly blessed as a practicing physician who lives way below my means, this gives me more discretionary income to help some of our families with. Look around your Crew and see if wealthier families can financially adopt some of the lower income Venturers. We try to make it possible for everyone to play all the time. The Venturing program is really important and needs to be as available as possible.

Many families will effectively hide their financial challenges from you. Please make it a point to swing by homes and apartments to look around. I stopped by one family’s apartment and discovered no furniture, not a table, not a chair, not a bed. They could not afford it and were sleeping on the floor. Their Venturer was suffering. We loaned them a table and some chairs so he could do his homework sitting up and so they could eat at a table.

Asking a low income family to kick out \$1,250 for a National Jamboree is a non-starter. But, applying for Council or National Scholarship assistance, and getting matching dollars for parents, can make Jamboree dreams a reality for low income Venturers. We currently have eight that we are working with to ensure 2017 National Jamboree participation. We started early, figured out a reasonable monthly amount that they could pay, and began collecting their money in the Crew account two years in advance of the Jamboree. Council scholarship help just was made available 12 months out from the Jamboree, they have money to pay up to half the Jamboree cost for over 40 participants. Between matching dollars in the Crew, scholarship help, and a long range savings program, these low income Venturers will have an awesome experience at the 2017 National Scout Jamboree. We did the same thing for the 23<sup>rd</sup> World Scout Jamboree where the cost was \$5,750 each. Six of our low income Venturers attended! Compared to the World Jamboree effort, the price of the 2017 National Jamboree just isn’t as much of a challenge. It was good training though.

When parents defer to fund the Crew activities, before you write off the kids, look around and try to make some magic happen. Parents can’t come up with money they don’t have. By doing some advanced planning with them, you can make it work! As a leader, you need to adopt the event horizon the needy families don’t have so they can plan far enough ahead to be able to afford these special opportunities. The ‘event horizon’ that I try to employ is 2 years out – that number seems to work well. We automatically start signing people up for Jamborees two years in advance and that opportunity is always published on our Crew calendar.

## **Personality Disorders**

A personality disorder interferes with activities of daily living and interpersonal relationships. It falls well short of meeting the criteria for a psychosis (Axis Three disorder for you fans of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of the American Psychiatric Association). People with personality disorders may have unreasonable needs for attention, phobias, low self esteem, or behavioral patterns that place them outside of the behaviors ‘accepted’ by the majority of the population. They may demonstrate compulsions – like hand washing or counting behavior; they may avoid certain types of activities due to fear. These characteristics occur not just in parents, but also in Venturers.

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**You are not going to be able to significantly alter a person's behavior. It isn't your job and you probably are not trained to do it (Apologies to readers who are clinical psychologists – you are trained, and you know just how challenging it can be). As a leader, you need to accept the people as they are, recognize their limitations, and work with them to give their kids the best possible program. Be accepting and don't push too hard. You need to build trust with the parents who have personality disorders and as you build the trust you will be able to provide better program to their youth. Many parents with personality disorders recognize their own limitations and sincerely want you to be a surrogate for them in providing experiences for their kids that they cannot provide because of their issues. Work hard to get and maintain trust and then encourage those Venturers to take full advantage of the program. Recognize that parents with personality disorders can be needy and require more care, 'feeding' and communication than 'normal' parents. This is a case where 5% of the parents can take 95% of your time – USE THE COMMITTEE TO HELP YOU!!!! Assign a committee member to each needy parent and let them do the majority of the communication. A friendly committee member can alleviate all kinds of stress that these parents can place on advisors. Ask the committee chair to assign a committee member to befriend and communicate with the parent at issue.**

**This article is about parents but I will diverge briefly to address Venturers with personality issues. When you observe abnormal behavior, first contact the parent and ask if they know about it. This is particularly important because they can leverage the medical and counseling resources to address it, you can't. The Venturer who engages in cutting behavior is asking for attention, but they may cut themselves in areas that are not apparent. Your first warning may be other Venturers discussing the behavior. Please talk to the Venturer right away, ask them if they are considering suicide, ask them if they are thinking about hurting someone else, get the parent involved immediately. Venturers who cut are also likely to seek attention in other ways and these episodes can endanger other Venturers. Realize that a Venturer who cuts is prone to other behaviors. They may need a holiday and some therapy before they can participate again.**

**For more benign behaviors, like compulsive hand washing, you can take a more relaxed approach. Keep your sense of humor and treat it a bit lightly – Venturers with compulsive hand washing slow everyone down. When they say they need to go to the bathroom, ask if it is to wash their hands. If it is, and you have time, place a 15 second limit on the behavior. Make the point that the entire Crew cannot wait on them but do it with a smile. There is no place for anger or being judgmental here. Your goal is to allow them to address their needs and balance the behavior against the timeliness needs of the Crew. There is a happy medium and you have to help broker it.**

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Phobias in Venturers can really hinder their experiences. Fully forty percent of the American population is afraid of flying, yet commercial aviation in North America is absolutely the safest, lowest risk form of travel available. Some Venturers had near drowning experiences when they were very young and are afraid of water. Others are afraid of social situations or crowds. In each case, you need to be aware of their self imposed limitations and work to help them overcome their fears if they will let you or at least work a program that takes their fears into account.

## **Psychoses**

This is a tough one! Parents with psychoses, when properly medicated, may be undetectable to you. All of a sudden, they have a psychotic break because they miss a dose of meds or encounter some other stress and now you are stranded because you were counting on them to drive and they are off to the ER in an ambulance. The medical form is the key here. Every parent who works with Venturers should do one every year. If they are honest, and report a recent history of psychoses or medication for psychoses, please do not count on them. You need to be aware of the potential for harm if a psychotic break occurs.

Humans tend to follow pretty reliable patterns of abnormal behavior so a brief primer on the common issues is probably in order. Mania is unusual optimism an apparent willingness to take on herculean tasks and an unrealistic assessment of the possible. The solution is recognizing it and the treatment in the Crew is teamwork. Avoid relying on a single willing parent to get things done. By bringing in several parents to a task, you get the benefit of many hands making light work and don't depend on any one person. Mania is resistant to medication to some degree. Mania frequently alternates with depression but depression can occur without mania. The depressed parent will avoid contact, not return calls, not show up and appear sad. They may lose or gain weight, demonstrate hygiene issues, be very fatigued and cease to function normally. Medication for depression can work pretty well if parents are getting adequate medical help. You need to realize that both depression and mania are diseases, just like a strep throat or measles, and they require treatment. When a parent is having problems related to a major mental health disturbance, sometime the best thing you can do is to offer to help the affected Venturer participate normally. Be aware that incapacity of a parent may place sibling care responsibilities on the Venturer and they may lose program opportunities because of those child care responsibilities. Single parents with psychoses present particularly difficult problems.

Schizophrenia, the substitution of an internal reality for the external reality is also an incapacitating psychoses. If a parent has this in their recent history, you will not be able to rely on them. Make sure you have adequate resources to take care of the parent, if they become disabled, and the Venturers.

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Psychoses can occur from poisoning and a variety of related medical conditions. A parent with a distant history of psychoses has met the test of time and probably presents a minimal risk if the event was five or more years in the past.

## **Epilepsy – Seizure Disorders**

Epilepsy is a disease that results in the unpredictable and uncontrollable event known as a seizure. Seizures may be catastrophic as in the 'grand mal' where the epileptic falls to the floor, is wracked by one to three minutes of uncontrolled tetanic muscular contractions and then reverts to an extremely fatigued 'post ictal' state lasting 20 to 30 minutes; or less apparent such as staring and distraction with concurrent loss of attention. Bottom line is that epileptics cannot drive, swim, operate power equipment or climb ladders or ropes. As long as you are aware of the limitations of an epileptic, you should be able to fully integrate them into your Venturing program. If they have a seizure lasting less than five minutes, they do not need to go to the emergency room. They'll recover on their own and just need to be given a chance to rest. Sending them to the ER wastes everyone's time and money. The ER cannot do anything for them. A grand mal seizure lasting more than five minutes is a life threatening emergency because the epileptic cannot breathe. This condition, 'status epilepticus', requires immediate medical intervention but is relatively rare.

## **Summary**

I hope this article provides some food for thought. We do our best work when we make the Venturing program available to everyone. Children of problem parents arguably need Venturing more than any other group so dealing with the parents becomes an imperative to providing a robust program that meets community needs. Teamwork between the committee and the advisors is key, no one can do everything alone. If you have some experiences you think would be helpful to other readers of The Forum, I encourage you to write them down and share them. The bottom line is that we need to approach each other with love in our hearts, be forgiving, and strive to work with everyone for the benefit of their kids. In twenty years, those kids will be running things so we really owe it to them to get them off to a good start – and that means working with their parents. By demonstrating the principles of the Scout Oath and Law in our dealings with parents, everyone wins and Scouting fulfills its purpose.

## **Pete Mapes**

Our author has nine years of experience as a Venturing Leader and twenty five years of experience as a Boy Scout and Girl Scout Leader. He and his wife raised three of their own children and have been long time supporters of Scouting. Pete is a practicing physician, retired Air Force Officer and has been a regular contributor to The Forum including his four recent articles on Large Crews.

# Large Crews

## Large Crew Basics

By Pete Mapes, NCAC Crew 27 Associate Advisor

Last month I had the privilege of meeting with the top three (AKA: Key Three – Chairman, Commissioner and Executive) in our Service Area. We have three districts in our Service Area and the top three wanted to talk about Venturing recruiting. Our Crew is in the Potomac District and our membership roster accounts for 67 of the 117 registered Venturers in the District. The other 11 Crews have the other 50 Venturers. It is currently the largest Venturing Crew in the Council. What the top three wanted to know was how to increase Venturing recruiting.

We had a great session and I thought it might be worth sharing in The Forum.

I suggested to the top three that they might be putting the cart before the horse. The reason our Crew has undergone expansion, when the others don't, is two-fold. First and most importantly, we offer an extensive program. Program is what recruits people. Second - we don't follow the model put forth by BSA for a Venturing Crew. I'm going to start by exploring (no pun intended) the current national model for a Crew.

The national model imagines a patrol sized unit. This is obvious because when you go to the Scout Shop to buy Venturing Youth Leadership Insignia, you cannot purchase insignia for a patrol leader equivalent in Venturing. Following Baden-Powell's dictum of one boy <youth> leading 4 to 8 other boys <youths>, The National model obviously intends Crews to be roughly the size of a patrol. This concept is duplicated at the National Jamboree where Boy Scout Troops have 32 boys in 4 patrols and four senior leaders but Venturing Units are clustered as four Crews of ten people each (1 or 2) Advisors and 8 or 9 youth with no senior leadership team.



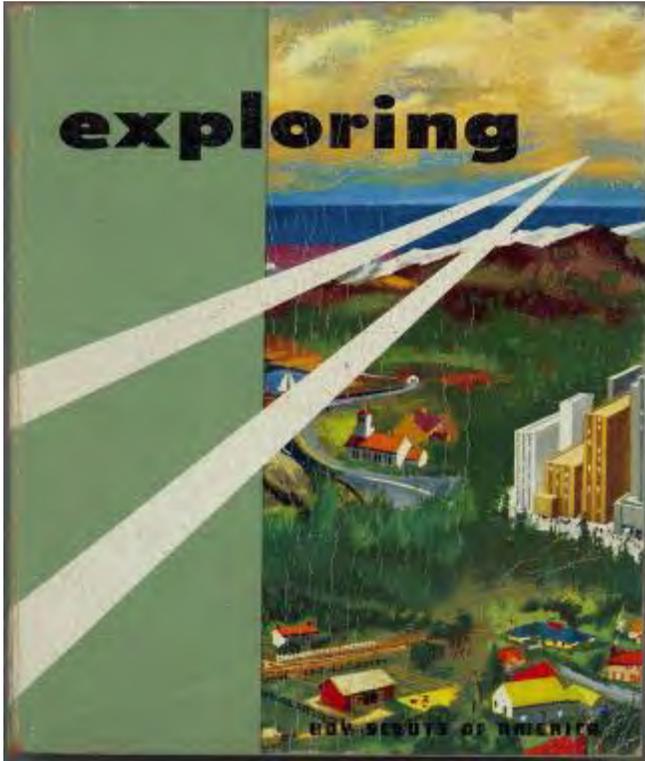
A Crew 27 MiniCrew Meeting During a Crew Meeting

# Large Crews

## Large Crew Basics

By Pete Mapes, NCAC Crew 27 Associate Advisor

The National model doesn't work well when Crews expand because it has no middle management layer for the Venturers. In the past, when Venturing was still Exploring, before 1958, the Unit was a Post, led by a Senior Crew Leader, and the patrol equivalent was called a Crew, led by a Crew Leader. In 1958, the structure became essentially what it is now with an elected President, a Post/Crew Staff, but no middle management. In short, the patrol method was removed from the program with the publication of the 1958 book, Exploring.



The 1958 Exploring Program Book that removed the Patrol Method from Exploring!

The current concept of a Venturing Crew is an appendage to a Troop and they seem to be formed for one of two reasons. Either the Crew is created to allow the sisters to camp with the Troop or it is created to allow senior Scouts to develop their own program with more high adventure, away from the 11 and 12-year-olds. While these are both laudable intentions, they fail for predictable reasons.

Let's talk about 'sister' Crews first. Girls have to be 14 or have completed 8th grade to be Venturers. In most Troops, the bulk of the boys are 10 1/2 thru 14 and the camping program is targeted at 12-year-olds. Girls are generally ahead of boys in development at these ages so on the whole; you are bringing a bunch of girls who are the equivalent of 16-year-old boys into a program designed for 12 year olds. This explains why these Crews usually last about a year. At that point,

the novelty has worn off and the girls are ready to move on. Few sister Crews make it to the 4-year point.

Next up are Senior Scout Crews (Not Venture Patrols - real Crews). These are formed with the best of intents. It is a great idea to give the Senior Scouts an opportunity to take on advanced forays into high adventure activities where they don't have to worry about the younger Scouts. It stretches them and gives them activities with their peer group. So what is the problem? The problem is that the reservoir of Senior Scouts is limited by the depth and interests of the Senior Scouts IN THE TROOP! These Crews are self limited. It is really hard to capture the interests of senior Scouts who are in band, sports and a ton of other activities already. The Senior Scout Crews tend to be very limited in their activities and small in size because the people in them only come from the Troop. Since they have a tendency to stay small, and not recruit, they fold in four years only to reappear in a few years and then fold again.

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Both the Senior Scout Crews and the Sister Crews usually end up sharing a committee and frequently – Adult leadership with the Troop. Most committees and adult leaders will naturally focus preferentially on the Troop because both units are participating in the Troop program. If a committee and scoutmaster corps have two Units, which one has priority? Would you want to be in a Unit that the committee and adult leadership viewed as a second priority? These are two more reasons why the Senior Scout Crews and the Sister Crews don't work well or last long - shared resources and less than top priority.

Note that I am explaining why most Crews fail to expand and have short lives. There are exceptions and they usually occur due to remarkably effective leadership on someone's part. The exceptions do not occur because the current model is good.

From 1939 thru 1958, Exploring sustained solid growth as a program. It was following Baden-Powell's organizational constructs pretty directly. The reorganization in 1959 changed the organizational construct to what we have today in Venturing. Picking up a few dated handbooks from before 1958 and after 1958 can be very educational. The question is: how to design a Crew that will sustain growth as it expands beyond 10 to 15 Venturers?

Our solution was to revert to the pre-1958 Post model. Since Exploring headed over to 'Learning-for-life' and took the 'Post' with them, we couldn't have that Unit name so the Venturers came up with 'Crew' for the Unit and 'Mini-Crew' for the patrol equivalent Unit. We have five Mini-Crews and each one is larger than the other Crews in our District. We have Venturers who are away at college, in hospital, or just too busy to be part of a Mini-Crew. For those Venturers, we have an 'inactive list.' This relieves the Mini-Crew Guides (Leaders) from having to contact people who can't or won't play anyway but who still want to attend some activities. The Mini-Crews are asked to try to meet the requirements for the National Honor Patrol listed in the Patrol Leader's Handbook and to do it largely outside of the Crew meetings.

As an aside, to get Youth Leadership Insignia that matches our structure, we went back to the pre-1958 Exploring program, coordinated with the Supply Division of BSA HQ and had the old insignia reproduced. They are quite a conversation piece, the Venturers love them and the Supply Division even led us to Lion Brothers of Owings Mills, MD who manufactured the original insignia for Exploring. Can't do any better than that!



President

Vice President

MiniCrew Guide

Asst. MiniCrew Guide

Pre-1958 Exploring Youth Leadership Insignia Modified For Crew 27's use.

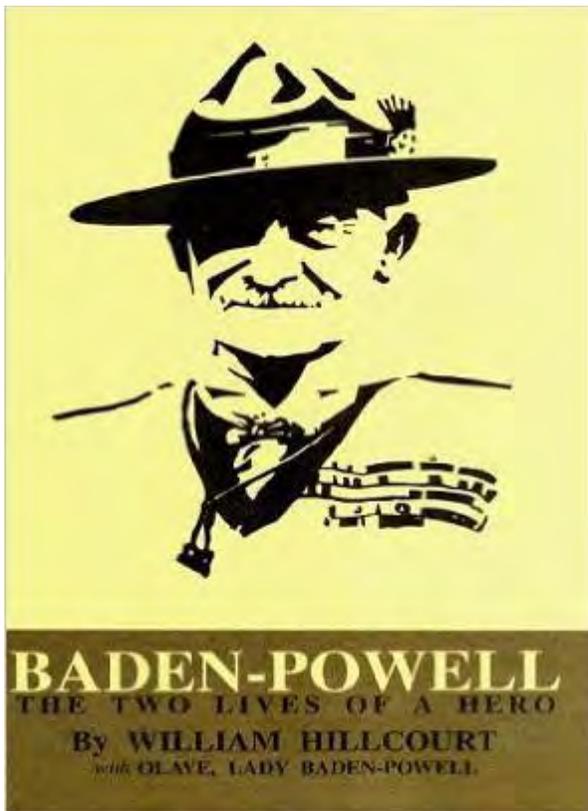
# Large Crews

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I've written extensively about large Crew Program before in The Forum so here is a quick reprise: Our Crew has program ending in August of each year and a robust summer program with NYLT, two weeks of Venturing Summer Camp, a Jamboree or a high adventure, and a week-long summer adventure trip at the end of each summer. During the year, we have at least one activity each month and meet as a Crew every other Sunday evening. New officers are elected at the end of January each year and they still have published program in place thru the end of August. The new officers are responsible to have a new program through the end of the following August to the committee for support approval by the end of March each year. Each set of officers executes 7 months of the preceding officers program and 5 months of their own program leaving 7 months on the books for the next team.

This was my message to the Area Key Three. Venturing recruiting is done by offering a high-quality program directed at a median age of about 16 in Crews that are organized to sustain growth beyond the level conceived by the current national model. If the Crews and program are not in place, any recruiting drive will fail because there will not be any reason for the recruited Venturers to stay in the program.



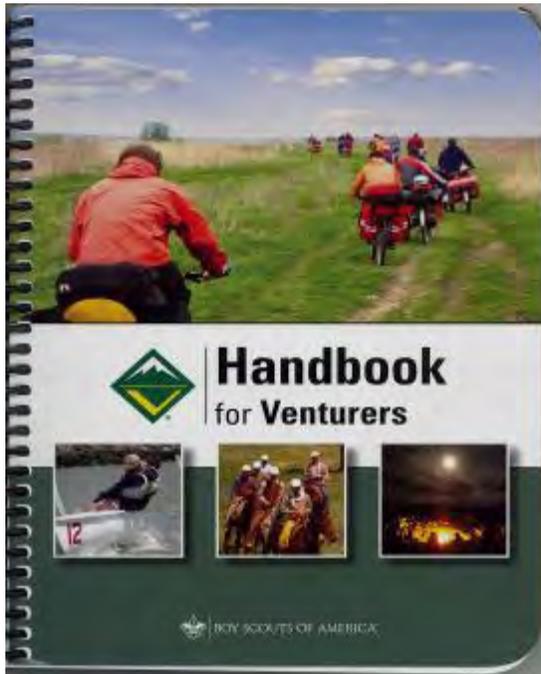
What does it take to make this happen. Current training for adults in Venturing is not adequate. It doesn't cover advancement adequately and it continues to be light and, in my opinion, doomed, on the model for Crew organization. Baden-Powell's famous quote considering the patrol method was forgotten by Exploring in 1958 and never returned to the program: "The patrol method is not a way of doing Scouting, it is THE way of doing Scouting." We need to recover that to be effective. Even in business, the direct supervision of more than ten subordinates is problematic. Humans are designed to function in family units of 5 to 9 and Baden-Powell knew this and capitalized on it. His mother basically ran the family as a patrol after his father died. Read *Baden-Powell: two lives of a hero* by Bill Harcourt and Olave Baden-Powell. It is the best book about our founder available!

As you read this, you may wonder – ‘who gave Crew 27 the authority to experiment?’ The answer is at the bottom of page 45 of the *Handbook For Venturers.* ‘... crew leadership is encouraged to modify the crew’s organizational approach ...’

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I've done the new online training for Venturing Leaders and I did the old in-person training before the program change in 2014. Neither was adequate in my view. The training needs to be expanded and must be conducted with the *Handbook For Venturers* issued to every participant and open for reference. I think it would take at least four hours to conduct adequate intro training for Advisors, maybe more. Committee Training should be done in two phases, general training and position specific training. This would prevent the angst experienced by so many new Treasurers, Secretaries, Chairpersons, etc. the first time they dig into their jobs.

I don't think there are any real problems with the new advancement program. It took a little while to roll out the required trainings and BSA finally went to the Project Management Institute for the project management training, but the trainings are now solid syllabuses. I'm

so glad they kept RANGER because the new ALPS model doesn't provide the skills necessary for outdoor adventures except for first aid and CPR training. All of the outdoor expertise now resides in RANGER. One challenge we face as an outdoor-focused Crew is the lack of a structured curriculum for teaching outdoor skills. Boy Scouts have a very detailed curriculum through their advancement program but the Venturing RANGER Award is a very large challenge served up as a single entity. They should have instituted an Outdoor Bronze equivalent so there would be some recognition halfway to RANGER, they could have just kept Outdoor Bronze. Our Crew still awards 'Outdoor Bronze'; it just isn't a nationally recognized rank anymore. The new ALPS model awards in Venturing are Awards, not Ranks. RANGER is still a rank. You can verify this by looking in internet advancement to see how it is listed. The ALPS awards are over in the 'Awards' section with Tot'in Chip and Mile Swim while RANGER is in the Ranks section with Eagle. Moreover, if a Venturer earns Summit and RANGER, RANGER will be listed as the highest priority Rank. Same thing with Venturers holding Eagle and RANGER, it is RANGER that is listed in that case.



The Pre-1958 Universal Insignia for Exploring has been adopted by Crew 27 as the Insignia for the Crew's Award of the Outdoor Bronze Award. This provides youth with recognition halfway to RANGER. This level of recognition is important because RANGER is hard and takes two years to earn. Also, many Venturers who try for RANGER never get there and this provides recognition of their effort.

# Large Crews

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Now we finally get to what the key three wanted to know about - Venturing recruiting! In my view, we should make a significant push every year to educate 8th graders about Venturing and get them excited about the prospect. To do this, we need:

- 1) Crews for them to register in that have active program
- 2) Crews that have an organizational construct that allows expansion to accommodate the new Venturers
- 3) Summer Camp Programs designed for Venturers and available all summer long. Scouting has long known that if you get a youth to camp you tend to keep them in the program – this is true of Venturers as well!

The Venturing program at Goshen Scout Reservation is a good example of what is needed throughout the nation to support an expansion of Venturing membership. Take a peek at:

<http://www.ncacbsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/2017-Goshen-Venturing-Advancement-Leaders-Guide-VENTURERS-ONLY.pdf>

- 4) Local high adventure options that can be utilized at minimal expense to ensure everyone can attend – In our case, we use the Lenhok'sin program at Goshen Scout Reservation.
- 5) Regular availability of:
  - A) Introduction to Leadership Skills (for Crews) - ILS(C)\*
  - B) Goal Setting & Time Management Training\*
  - C) Project Management Training\*
  - D) Mentoring Training\*

\* Even though these courses are supposed to be taught in the Crews. Small Crews of five to ten Venturers rarely have the resources, motivation or mass to carry them off effectively. As a result, progress toward venturing awards stagnates. These courses should be regularly taught at Universities of Scouting and District/Council Venturing Trainings for youth so that they can be brought back to the Crews and instituted by people who have taken them. Venturers from our Crew are teaching them at our University of Scouting in February.

E) National Youth Leadership Training

- 6) A Council level committee on Venturing (may include Sea Scouts and Explorers too). If only a VOA is present, there is no capability to raise and hold an account for funds in the Council budget. Funded committees can get things done that VOAs can't do.



# **Large Crews**

## **Large Crew Basics**

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**Baden-Powell conducted the Brownsea Island experiment from 1 to 8 August 1907 with 21 boys. This number was prophetic because BSA has long taught that the youth led organization requires 22 active youth to make it work. Once again, the current national model falls short. Crews have to be organized and supported to sustain numbers of 22 members or more. To do this, they need:**

**1) At least five well trained adult advisors with a 2/3 gender split who like to camp or do whatever it is that the Crew likes to do. Increase by one for every additional six Venturers and alternate genders.**

**A) These advisors need to be very familiar with the Handbook for Venturers**

**B) They also need to fully understand RANGER requirements or other awards**

**C) They need to be graduates of Introduction to Outdoor Leadership Skills**

**D) They should be working on Wood badge or already beaded.**

**2) A Crew Committee with a Chair and a large enough Crew Committee to fully support transportation needs and fulfill all Committee duties (treasury, secretary, web support, advancement, activities, fund raising, membership & adult training). In our Crew the advancement role is undertaken by the Advisor Staff.**

**3) A Crew organization with patrol equivalent Units (Mini-Crews) within it.**

**4) Access to first aid and CPR instruction.**

**5) A published schedule of activities at least a year in advance.**

**6) Access to required Venturing Advancement Trainings or the ability to sustain it within the Crew.**

**7) Access to Venturing Leadership Training (ILS(C) & NYLT)**

**8) Financial support.**

**9) Presence on 'BeAScout.org'**

**10) A Crew web site.**

**11) No membership barriers.**

**12) Active presence at District Roundtables, Council VOA and the Council Venturing Committee.**

**Some of our goals in Crew 27 are:**

**to get everyone first aid & CPR trained within 2 months of joining;**

**to get everyone Safety trained & through Crew Officer Orientation in 2 months;**

**to get every new Venturer to 2 weeks of camp & through NYLT in their first year.**

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If they do that they tend to stay all the way through high school and longer if they go to college locally. Our advancement program is solid and we find that just over half of our Venturers actively pursue advancement. The rest are with us for the adventure and the great opportunities the Crew has to offer. Even if they aren't advancing, they still do all of the leadership training through NYLT. We'd like to bottle this and help other Crews grow as well. Our Area Key Three seems to agree so we are all waiting to see what resources they want to bring to the task. Unfortunately, it isn't as simple as just recruiting. The good news is that there are a ton of young people who would be thrilled to be part of an active Venturing program. We just need to let them know about it and provide a place for them to do it! If you want more info on Crew 27's adventures, go to:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/0B0yUclfLkpRvRXhHMU51c1dIR2s>

Note – the lack of a well formed outdoor curriculum in Venturing should be fixed. We are lucky that we can make up for it by using an excellent Venturing Summer Camp Program at Goshen Scout Reservation's Camp Bowman. This could be partially addressed by opening Introduction to Outdoor Leadership Skills (IOLS) to venturing youth in outdoor focused Crews.

FYI – Northeast Region Crew 8 used the pre-1958 leadership organization at the 23<sup>rd</sup> World Scout Jamboree and it worked exceptionally well.



### The Authors

The idea for this article grew from a meeting held by the Montgomery Service Area Key Three (Ben Overby (Commissioner), John Hanson (Council Vice-President for the Montgomery Service Area) & Don Kilgore (Field Director)) with Pete Mapes in November of 2016. Since the Service Area Key Three (Top Three) expressed interest in the organization of a very successful Crew, Pete decided to get down on paper some of the thoughts and areas of interest that arose in the meeting. Pete was the founding Advisor of Crew 27 and served in that position from 2009 through early 2016. The Crew's second Advisor (2016), Capt Lisa Pearse, MC, USN, reviewed the article and provided substantive comments to improve it. Nona Mapes, the Crew's first committee chair (2009-2016), did the same.

# Large Crews

## Advising Large Crews

By Pete Mapes

**INTRODUCTION:** The relationship of the Advisor and Associate Advisor staff to the Venturing Crew is complex and highly relationship dependent. Unlike Cub Packs and, unfortunately, most Boy Scout Troops, the Advisor is not the Unit Leader. That honor falls to the Crew President. This article will dissect some of the many duties, methods and tasks of Advisors and is focused on the role of the Advisor in the large Crew but is just as applicable to Advisors of small and medium size Crews.

### **CRITICAL ROLES OF THE ADVISOR:**

There are a number of critical roles fulfilled by the Advisor. First of these is to be a sounding board for the Crew leadership. To be effective in this role, the Advisor must be well schooled in Venturing Policy found in *The Guide To Safe Scouting*. The Advisor must also be fully cognizant of the contents of the *Venturing Handbook*, the leadership training syllabuses (Crew Officer Orientation, Introduction to Leadership Skills for Crews & National Youth Leadership Training), Venturing Safety Training materials (From the DVD), youth protection standards (from the Y-02 Venturing YPT Course) and the Venturing courseware used to meet advancement requirements (Goal Setting/Time Management, Project Management & Mentoring). The Advisor also needs to know skills applicable to the specialties of the Crew and the goals of the Chartering Organization.

The second critical role of the Advisor is to serve as an example. Whatever the Crew Uniform - the Advisors wear it flawlessly; the Advisors eschew foul language and make corrections on the spot; The Advisors treat all people with respect and insist that the Venturers do likewise; The Advisor knows the program better than anyone else in the Crew and lives the Scout Oath and Law in their daily lives.

*Show me a poorly uniformed Troop and I'll show you a poorly uniformed leader.*  
Robert Stevenson Smyth Baden-Powell, Lord of Gilwell & Chief Scout of the World



Plaque in memory of a visionary - To Clara Barton 'Angel of the Battlefield' - Antietam What will your legacy be?

# Large Crews

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The third task of the Advisor is to demonstrate vision and planning. The Advisor does this by acting like an alarm clock. Venturers, particularly those aged 14 to 16, are notorious procrastinators and tend to engage in 'line of sight scheduling.' They generally do not understand how to delegate and when they do delegate, they have trouble checking up and are honestly surprised when people fail to do what was promised. A good Advisor gently reminds the Crew Officers of upcoming responsibilities and, by asking questions, gets them to think two years ahead in program planning.



Crew 27 at the Antietam National Battlefield

The fourth task of the Advisor is to watch out for financially or ability challenged Venturers to make sure they are included. If the Advisor doesn't have personal means to bring the least funded Venturer along, he/she works closely with the Committee to garner resources to give everyone a complete Venturing Program. This could take the shape of product sales starting two or more years before a Jamboree or National High Adventure Program. Maybe it means being aware of Council scholarships for Camp or a Jamboree and ensuring deadlines are complied with. It could mean reaching out to Crew or community resources to look for matching dollars. There are a million

ways to skin this cat, but the Advisor needs to figure out who needs the help and works to make the impossible a reality.

None of this happens without the Crew Advisor being there. In order to find the disadvantaged Venturers, you have to see how the Ventures act and also how they interact. You can't be the alarm clock unless you attend all events. You can't be a visionary unless you can communicate your vision to the Crew - and this doesn't happen at a distance. You can't set the example or enforce National/Council and Chartering Organization standards and policy if you aren't there. Bottom line - if you can't be there, step down and let someone else do it!



Venturer from NER Crew 8 at a Japanese School during the 23rd World Scout Jamboree

# Large Crews

## Advising Large Crews

By Pete Mapes

**COMMUNICATION:** The Advisor communicates at a variety of levels. Most important is the communication with the Venturers. In general, you need to stay in the background - if you are in the foreground, you rob the Venturers of the opportunity to lead. When you have something to say, it should generally be a nudge delivered surgically to a single Venturer. A brief comment, a passing word. "How's Susan doing on getting the Philmont information completed on the web site?" "Did Joe get the food planned for next weekend?" Why didn't Libby sign up for the caving trip, was it too much money?" Every interaction is carefully orchestrated to gather essential information, stimulate action or get Venturers thinking about the business at hand. It should never be directive, and here is a secret - it should never demand compliance unless safety or national policy is at stake. Venturers need to be allowed to bear the consequences of failure and **YOU HAVE TO LET THEM FAIL**. Don't get me wrong, failure should not be the norm, but if you are always saving the bacon, they aren't learning to plan and carry out their plans.

So your communications need to be sparse, carefully thought out, respectful and timely. Sometimes I think the most important skill is knowing when **NOT** to communicate!

One important message that needs to be sent regularly and repeated, communication is two way. Venturers need to learn that a printed schedule has no value without personal reminders. If they want participation, they need an ongoing and vibrant conversation among the membership that is effective at moving information. All communications need to be acknowledged.



Venturers taking ILS(C) at the 2016 NCAC/082 University of Scouting

# **Large Crews**

## **Advising Large Crews**

**By Pete Mapes**

**TRAINING:** You cannot expect your Venturers to be able to carry out the program if they have not been trained. In a new Crew, the Advisor may need to get training started and certainly needs to mentor the Venturers as they conduct the necessary courses. In an experienced Crew with enough mass to sustain its own program (22 or more active Venturers and five years in existence), the Venturers do ALL of the training. What training do they need? Within a month of joining they should receive Personal Safety Training and Crew Officer Orientation. Obviously Venturing Participants (age 18 to 20) need Y-02 Venturing Youth Protection Training before they are registered. Before the end of the first year, a Venturer should also complete Introduction to Leadership Skills for Crews {ILS(C)} and National Youth Leadership Training (NYLT). It is only when these four courses are completed that a Venturer should be regarded as fully trained from a leadership perspective. As the Advisor, you gently ask the question "Who needs what?" so that the Crew leadership will echo your thought and figure it out for themselves. The question is rhetorical - you don't expect an answer but you do expect the Crew leadership to KNOW the answer.

As for the required Award coursework - Crews should make it available twice a year. This can be done inside or outside of the Crew. Each year our Council convenes a University of Scouting and Venturers from our Crew teach the award courses at this event. This is a huge help to small Crews without the mass or interest to sustain their own courses of instruction. The Council offers ILS(C) at University of Scouting as well. Each year the 50 available places are sold out a month in advance!

**PHYSICAL LOCATION:** On a Crew hike, you are at the back of the pack with any other adults. You encourage any Venturers who fall out to keep up and remind the Crew leadership that the slowest Venturer leads the pace so that no one is left behind. You catch any stragglers and offer encouragement. If something happens that ends up being beyond the Venturers experience, you quietly talk the Crew leadership through the response possibilities. You are off to the side, at the back of the pack, sometimes out of sight and NEVER in the lead.

In camp you are in the adult tenting area, you stay away from the central Crew areas because your mere presence will upset the balance of leadership and you make sure other adults are just as thoughtful. Youth led Crew operations are a process that can be interfered with and an adult in the mix disturbs the precious equilibrium you are striving to maintain. If an adult enters the Crew's immediate operational turf, the youth will be distracted and if the adult starts to accomplish duties, the youth will become confused. Watch the process from a distance, avoid placing your physical presence in the midst of it.

# Large Crews

## Advising Large Crews

By Pete Mapes

At meeting of the Crew leadership, you are not at the table. You are outside of the circle, watching, listening, taking notes to use during reflection. Your concerns are the nature of interactions, the maintenance of Venturing standards, ensuring safety and youth protection. If a Venturer is ineffective in the group, let the group tell them. If a Venturer dominates the group, let the group stop them. You hold your feedback and observations for the end of the gathering and then offer your thoughts surgically to the Venturers who would benefit from hearing them. You are quiet, unobtrusive, reflective. You complement effective behavior and question ineffective efforts. "You did a great job getting the meeting back on track by sticking to your agenda." "Do you think that rehashing the food on last month's camping trip contributed anything of value today or could you have left it alone and gotten the same result in less time?"

At Crew meetings, you get a minute at the end for the Advisor's minute. OK, maybe you get five minutes but it had better be worth listening to. Please do your homework! For the rest of the meeting you are in the background supporting the youth leadership.



Crew 27 at Philmont Scout Ranch - 2016

**BUFFERING:** Helicopter parents are out there. They can show up at summer camp unannounced and waltz right into the middle of the youth area. They have no clue how disruptive they are. See them coming, take them aside, explain that the Venturers can do it by themselves and that they do not need adult assistance. Offer to train them, give them a chair in the leader's area, take them on a nature hike, do anything to keep them busy and out of the hair of the youth.

Better yet, if you have a senior Venturer you can trust to play along: get the senior Venturer to pleasantly escort the impinging adult out of the operational area while explaining how important it is to allow the Venturers to lead themselves without adult intervention.

# Large Crews

## Advising Large Crews

By Pete Mapes

**CREW DISCIPLINE:** You empower the Crew leadership to enforce discipline and if a Venturer is having a rough day, you back up leadership in getting the unruly Venturer to participate and follow the Scout Oath and Law. Worst case, you back up your Crew President who decides to send an unruly Venturer home. If there is any question about consequences, Crew leadership can convene a 'Court of Honor.' The original CoH at the dawn of the Scouting program in England was not an award ceremony. Rather, it was a review of behavior in the light of the Scout Oath and Law. The CoH is conducted by senior youth and the Advisor needs to back up the decision of the leaders while ensuring that YPT boundaries remain in effect and that a respectful attitude is retained by all involved. Options include confirming that the behavior of the accused Scout was Scout-like and not meriting punishment; to confirming malicious intent and meting out exclusion of the offender from the Crew on either a temporary or permanent basis. Lots of in between options exist as well. For instance, when a Venturer at the 2015 World Scout Jamboree found an opposite gender 'buddy' from another country (and got caught by yours truly) he became the expert briefer on the buddy system - and he still is! Crew leadership came up with that one! In general, verbal correction of adverse behavior is all that is required. Remember to run the 'teenager checklist of adverse behavior.' 1) Fed? 2) Rested? 3) Right Temperature (no fever or hypothermia)? 4) Ill? 5) In Pain (migraine, sore throat, etc)? 6) Mental stress (death in family, family stress, relationship stress, etc)? 7) Hydrated (this is the most common compromise in teens on outings in my experience)? 8) Meds taken?

If one of these is broke, please fix it before seriously pursuing consequences for misbehavior as the misbehavior was most likely a product of the stress.

**CONFERENCES:** The Venturing Program asks you to meet with Venturers as they progress through the Venturing Awards. You are neither approving or disapproving, that is the youth's job at the Board of Review. You are focused on getting the Venturer to look ahead to future challenges and reflect on the past to both learn from and savor it. Your role is essential and Venturers should look forward to sitting down with you for a chat. You know you are doing well when they seek out your counsel. Try to be Socratic, help them reflect and plan by asking questions rather than giving your opinion or being directive.

**COACHING:** Practice makes perfect and Venturers take on lots of new roles in the Venturing Program. In your role as Advisor, you are the Coach. Getting a Venturer to practice can be tough if they are a top student who never has to study - they don't practice in school so why should they practice in Venturing? As Venturers mature, they see the value in preparing and your job becomes easier. Remember that maturity is not measured by age. Different Venturers will be at vastly different points in their development and you need to clue in to where each actually is so you can be useful to them.

# Large Crews

## Advising Large Crews

By Pete Mapes

The first time a Venturer teaches something, they need some practice 'run throughs' to develop smooth transitions and get their timing down. First time running a meeting? - did they prepare an agenda, did they review the agenda with anyone to ensure they included all the pertinent topics. Venturing is all about practice and being prepared! As the coach, you get to remind the Venturers of the import of this.

**SUMMARY:** I hope you appreciate the delicacy of advising a Crew. Your Venturers are perched on the precipice of adulthood and they are about to become wholly accountable for their decisions and actions. The beauty of the Venturing program is that they get to dry run adulthood with essentially no risk attributed to failure. If you let them fail, they will learn how to succeed. If you do it for them they will learn that you will do it for them and they needn't bother to do it for themselves. If you encourage them to plan, they are more likely to get it right the first time. If you can get them to practice they will amaze you with their performance and they will learn that practice breeds success. You have the best job in the world - make sure you enjoy it!

*Never do anything a child can do, for in so doing, you rob them of the experience.*

Robert Stevenson Smyth Baden-Powell, Lord of Gilwell & Chief Scout of the World



# Large Crews

## Large Crew Service - Teaching Other Venturers

By Pete Mapes, NCAC Crew 27 Associate Advisor



Liam teaches Mentoring at the 2017 NCAC University of Scouting

It was Liam's fault! Back in September or October, he suggested that the Crew take on the responsibility for teaching Venturing advancement courses at the Council's annual University of Scouting. Liam isn't a Crew Officer this year but when he mentioned it to our Crew President, Elisabeth, it was a 'face palm' moment. She loved the idea and took it to Lola and Lisa (incoming and outgoing Advisors - well actually they are both very outgoing). Since it would happen on Lola's watch, she contacted Adair and offered to teach Goal Setting/Time Management & Mentoring. Adair is the Dean of the College of Adventure Scouting and he put the courses on the schedule.



Elisabeth - Crew 27 President



Johana - Instructor at Goal Setting

Elisabeth and Johana volunteered to teach Goal Setting/Time Management and their class size was set at 21 students. Liam and Bilal volunteered to teach Mentoring and their class size was set at 15 students.

In the mean time, yours truly was concerned that ILS(C) would fill up so I called Adair to see if we could split some older (over 18) Venturers into the adult ILS(C) class to make room for more youth in the youth ILS(C) class. Adair, it turns out was a tad ruffled because his lead instructor for teaching youth ILS(C) was no longer available to teach. He was weighing his options.

# Large Crews

## Large Crew Service - Teaching Other Venturers

By Pete Mapes, NCAC Crew 27 Associate Advisor

I suggested he just ask Crew 27 to take it on. We've had to run several ILS(C) classes this year in the Crew and are getting pretty good at it. He said that sounded like a good idea so I called Lola and she had two Venturers volunteering within a day. A third volunteered two weeks later. Time had flown and we were just two weeks out by the time the Venturers could get together to practice. One of them was brand new at this but the other two were old hands and very experienced. They hadn't taught 50 Venturers before but they were pretty sure they could.



Adair Petty - Dean of NCAC's College of Adventure Scouting



Lilly, Grace & Katie - Crew 27's ILS©  
Instructors for the 2017 NCAC University of Scouting

The ILS(C) instructors (Katie, Grace & Lilly) went through Forming, Norming, Storming and Performing in one meeting and a bunch of emails. Nona went out to pick up supplies for the larger class size. She is 'retired' following a 30 year career in the Air Force and has time during the day. I did an outline from the Instructor Guide to boil down the breakdown of the parts of the course. The instructors assigned themselves to parts of the course and figured out where and how to split the group when it was necessary.

Back at the ranch, Bilal had to drop as a mentoring instructor for sibling care issues. Liam was now on his own, but if anyone could handle it, Liam could. Back in 2013/4, when no one in our Council knew what the Venturing advancement courses even looked like, Liam took them in other Councils and brought them back to our Crew where he taught them. Liam was the first Venturer to earn Summit in our Council and in Area-6 of the BSA's Northeast Region. As of 2017 he is one of only two Summit Awardees in our Council, the third largest Council in BSA! He also holds RANGER and Eagle with 136 merit badges!

# Large Crews

## Large Crew Service - Teaching Other Venturers

By Pete Mapes, NCAC Crew 27 Associate Advisor

The appointed day arose - 18 Feb 2017! We all headed out to Hayfield Middle School in Arlington, VA where a thousand or so Scouts and Scouters would converge for their annual dose of BSA education. The place was over run. The parking lots were full! There were lines of people who didn't register in advance and people scurrying everywhere with the ubiquitous brown manila folders containing the individual schedule, obligatory patch, pink paper lunch ticket, school map and event evaluation sheet. Some of the historians had set up displays of historic Scouting uniforms and patches and the hallways were lined with vendors hawking camps, experiences and equipment. Everyone was more or less in uniform with a few noncomplying pairs of jeans and an incredible assortment of programs represented.

Sign up for ILS(C) was light this year, we usually turn people away. Twenty-five registered in advance, one couldn't make it because he was sick and three registered on site for a grand total of 27 students.

Mentoring filled 15 of 15 slots. Goal Setting/Time Management filled 20 of 21 slots. Surprisingly, some of the students were adults who wanted to take the course so they could teach it to their Crews. Makes me wonder why a Venturer wasn't doing that?



Adult Mentoring Students at the 2017 NCAC University of Scouting



NCAC 2017 University of Scouting ILS(C) Participants and Instructors

At any rate, Crew 27 ended up teaching eleven hours of Venturing Specific classes at the 2017 NCAC University of Scouting and taught courses required for specific advancement for the first time ever. Reviews were good and people seemed to be pretty happy. The University of Scouting gave us a great opportunity to shine and thanks to Liam's contagious idea, we were able to render significant service to other Venturers and Venturing Leaders in our Council!

# Large Crews: Boy Scout Advancement in Venturing

By Pete Mapes, NCAC/082, Crew 27, Associate Advisor & Potomac District Venturing Volunteer



One of the sources of Venturers is from Boy Scout Troops and many young men come to Venturing without going as far as they can with their Boy Scout advancement. While both RANGER and Summit are arguably more challenging and significantly rarer than Eagle Scout, Eagle Scout has a cachet in North America that makes it one of the most important things a young man can put in his biography, school application or job application.

The United States Military Services have long recognized the value of the Eagle Scout <Award> Rank. A young man who is an Eagle Scout is automatically promoted to the grade of E-3 when he finishes basic training. This means that he makes grade up to 18 months ahead of his contemporaries and starts out with a pay advantage of \$285.90/month not to mention being accelerated to higher grades because of his head start. As I pointed out to one high school junior who decided to earn Eagle before enlisting, that is a car payment.

It doesn't stop with higher enlisted military grade and pay from the start. The Eagle Scout Rank is also one of only three positive predictors of graduation from the Air Force Academy (USFA). Academy admissions cares about the Eagle Scout Rank and all else being equal, the Eagle Scout will be admitted before the non-Eagle every time.

I could go on, but the point is that there is significant incentive for a young man to earn the rank of Eagle Scout. We've had over half a dozen young men earn Eagle Scout as Venturers in our Crew over the years. If you refer to the current Venturing handbook, on page 166, it addresses "Venturers Earning Boy Scout Advancement."

"Venturers who earned First Class rank as registered Boy Scouts or Varsity Scouts are qualified until their 18th birthday to continue with Boy Scout advancement. Any work done while a Venturer can count toward both Boy Scout advancement and Venturing recognition at the same time. For instance, a conservation project required for Boy Scouting can also count in Venturing."

There is one exception to this and it is found in the Summit Requirements on page 179. I quote from requirement 8:

"Since earning the Pathfinder award, plan and conduct a service project as described in the Venturing Summit Award Service Project Workbook. Before you start, have the project proposal form from the workbook completed and approved by those benefitting from the effort, your Advisor, and another Venturer designated by your Crew leadership. **This project must be a different service project than the one carried out for the Eagle Scout <Rank> Award, the Sea Scout Quartermaster <Rank> Award, or the Girl Scout Gold Award.**"

## **Large Crews: Boy Scout Advancement in Venturing**

By Pete Mapes, NCAC/082, Crew 27, Associate Advisor & Potomac District Venturing Volunteer

Who are the Venturers who work on Scout advancement? In a couple of cases, they were young men who had earned First Class rank or above in Scouting, dropped out of Scouting and found their way to Venturing. In another case, a Troop was giving one of our Venturers a "rash" about his Eagle project. They didn't specify what their objections to his project were, they just would not sign off on it. He was dejected for nine months before sharing the details of his proposal with me. I didn't see a problem with his project proposal so he presented it to the Crew, the Crew approved it and he went ahead through the Crew instead of the Troop. The project was a huge success by the way and very demanding! His team logged over 600 hours in the process of completing the work, it was a 'whopper.'

Those of you intimately familiar with Boy Scout advancement can probably stop here. Boy Scout Advancement in the Crew is identical to Boy Scout Advancement in a Troop. Advisors conduct "Advisor <Scoutmaster> conferences" to ensure that all requirements have been met and refer Scouts to a Board of Review. For Star and Life Ranks, Boards of Review are composed of adult committee members from the Crew, Advisors are not allowed to participate. Neither are Venturing Youth! Just like Boy Scouts, Boards of Review for Boy Scout Ranks are strictly adult activities where the Crew Committee evaluates the progress of the Venturer toward Boy Scout Advancement goals and uses feedback from the young man to ensure that the Crew is adequately meeting the goals set for it by the Chartering Organization.



**Byron Lord (1945-2017), District Eagle Advisor for Potomac District in NCAC/082, oversaw the promotion of over 3,000 Eagles in over 30 years of service in this role, some of them were Venturers!**

## **Large Crews: Boy Scout Advancement in Venturing**

By Pete Mapes, NCAC/082, Crew 27, Associate Advisor & Potomac District Venturing Volunteer

Young men working on Eagle need to fulfill all of the specified requirements. For leadership credit, they must hold leadership positions for at least six months after earning Life Scout Rank before earning Eagle. In the Crew, these can include the positions of President, Vice President, Guide, Secretary, Treasurer, Quartermaster, Historian, Den Chief, Webmaster or Leave No Trace Trainer. They may also receive leadership credit for specified positions they held in Boy Scouts or Sea Scouts after achieving Life Scout Rank in Boy Scouts. Not all leadership positions in Boy Scouts or Sea Scouts count for advancement to Eagle so please refer carefully to current Boy Scout requirements. As always, the Boy Scouts of America do not permit anyone to add or subtract from award and rank requirements. If a Venturer is handicapped, he can have the National Council substitute requirements for him based upon his disability. This cannot be accomplished locally. Handicapped Venturers may also have the 18 year age cap extended. This is also done by the National Council through your local Council Disabilities Committee. There are developmentally delayed or handicapped Scouts and Venturers in their thirties still working on Eagle!

Advancement to the Eagle Rank in a Crew is identical to the way it is done in the Troop. An Eagle aspirant develops a project concept with a mentor and contracts with a non-Boy Scout organization in the community to deliver it. Once the Life Scout has completed the Eagle Project Proposal, had it signed by the benefiting organization, the Advisor and a member of the Crew Committee; he makes an appointment with a member of the District or Council Advancement Committee for approval to go ahead. Having received the approval from the District/Council Advancement Committee Member, the Venturer is cleared to continue. Once the project is complete and written up in the Eagle Project Workbook, the Scout gets a completion signature and completes his Eagle Application. The Eagle application is checked for accuracy by the Advancement Committee (or a designated person) and then the Scout returns to the District or Council Advancement Representative to receive project credit. After that, with endorsements on the Eagle application from the Advisor, Crew Committee Chair, Crew Advancement Committee Member (Optional), and the District/Council Advancement Committee Rep., the Scout can proceed to a Board of Review at the District or Council level. The Eagle Project Workbook must also be completed with the same signatures plus the signature of the benefiting organization for whom the project was accomplished.



A Crew 27 Venturer awaits his Eagle Scout Board of Review at the District BOR

## Large Crews: Boy Scout Advancement in Venturing

By Pete Mapes, NCAC/082, Crew 27, Associate Advisor & Potomac District Venturing Volunteer

A couple of fine points. The Advisor <Scoutmaster> conference must occur **BEFORE** the Scout's 18th birthday, so must the awarding of credit for the project and all of the other Eagle requirements. The Advisor <Scoutmaster> conference **DOES NOT** have to be the last thing that happens before the Board of Review is conducted, in fact, it can occur before the project, before all of the merit badges are earned or at any time after the applicant completes the Board of Review for Life Rank. The Board of Review may occur up to 90 days after the Scout's 18th birthday and this may be extended for another 90 days if there are extenuating circumstances.

If, for any reason, the Advisor refuses to hold a conference with an aspiring Star or Life Scout in Venturing, the Scout may request a Board of Review from the Crew Committee without an Advisor conference. In the case of an Eagle applicant, the District Committee would be advised that this Eagle candidate did not have the approval of the Advisor. If the Crew Committee chooses to disagree with either the Advisor or the District/Council Advancement Volunteer, they can write a letter referring the Eagle Applicant to the District/Council Board of Review for an advancement decision. If an Eagle applicant, sitting before a Council/District Board of Review, does not receive a unanimous endorsement for Eagle Scout, the Board outcome can be adjudicated by the Council Committee or their designee to award the rank over the objection of the dissenting member of the Board of Review. Suffice it to say that there are lots of protections written in to the system for Scouts seeking to advance. Despite this, only 6% of Boy Scouts earn Eagle Rank, even fewer of them are Venturers.

I hope this article helps you to understand some of the concepts surrounding completion of Boy Scout requirements to advance in rank while registered as a Venturer. Before the historical development of Exploring and Venturing specific awards and ranks, Explorers advanced by achieving the common Boy Scout Ranks. That is still possible for Venturers today.



A proud Crew 27 family recognizes their son with the Eagle Scout Rank

# Large Crews

## CSI - Death of a Crew

Pete Mapes

This 'article' is actually an outline so it doesn't read like a typical article. It is bulletined to organize some tried and tested techniques for helping Venturing Crews grow and mature. It also tries to answer the question:



## What are the things that kill Crews?

### Lack of middle management due to no patrol method

- Read 'Large Crew Basics' - In Google Drop Box referenced at end of this outline or download from 'The FORUM.'
- Limits the size by placing responsibility for everyone on a single leadership team without a PATROL METHOD (Since 1958 when patrol method was removed from Exploring)
- Limits recruiting
- Prevents ever reaching 'breakeven size' for a Scout Unit - 22 active Venturers (required for adequate leadership development) in nearly all cases.

### Lack of Adequate Program Planning

- Read 'Large Crew Program' - In Google Drop Box referenced at end of this outline or download from 'The FORUM.'
- Program plan has to stagger with leadership rotations so that new leadership doesn't have to create and execute program immediately.
  - ◆ Ideally program goes from the end of August every year to the end of August the next year.
  - ◆ Leadership teams should change out at re-charter because that is when it becomes apparent who will be 'playing' for the next year.
  - ◆ Currently, VOAs are aligned with the end of the school year

# Large Crews

## CSI - Death of a Crew

Pete Mapes

- They do not stagger their programs
- They struggle to put something together
- They find it impossible to do any program that requires long range planning of a year or more
- This makes them irrelevant
- The first job of a new leadership team at re-charter is to form up as a team and become effective - Forming, Storming & Norming
  - The second job is program planning
  - Since program should already exist for the first half year, there is no rush to throw something together
  - A high performing team elected in January and installed in February can form first, then produce program from August to August by the end of March
  - In the case of a VOA team taking office on June 1st, they should be stepping in to planned program that is in place through the end of the summer at least and preferably through the end of November
    - ♦ By the end of August, they should have the following November to November program on the books
    - ♦ A program planning cycle that is staggered with the leadership cycle is essential for development and execution of effective program
  - Anything less results in too short a notice for Venturers or Crews to respond thanks to all the other demands on Venturers time - in other words, failure to have a long range plan in place, results in a short range plan that membership did not have on their calendars - so they do the non-Venturing activities scheduled by other organizations they belong to and don't go with the Crew.



# Large Crews

## CSI - Death of a Crew

Pete Mapes

### Lack of Adequate Program

- Everyone is busy, many Crews do not develop an all encompassing program
- Program should be fun and challenging
- If program is created around advancement requirements, Venturers will advance but may not have fun
- If program is created to have fun Venturers will have fun but may not advance
- If program is created around fun and advancement, Venturers will advance while they are having fun - both of these are required to keep a Crew alive

### What is 'fun?'

- Teens are risk takers: to some degree, fun involves perceived risk
  - Perceived risk may not actually be very risky
  - Guide to Safe Scouting is essential
  - Classic Venturing activities
    - ◆ Backpacking
    - ◆ Climbing
    - ◆ National High Adventure
    - ◆ Primitive Camping
    - ◆ Travel
    - ◆ Whitewater
    - ◆ And on and on, you get the idea

### Teens want to make a difference

- Fun should include an aspect of service
  - Cub Scout Day Camp
  - Helping people & communities
  - Leading at camp, NYLT or NAYLE
  - Teaching
  - Should allow them to become 'renaissance' people



# Large Crews

## CSI - Death of a Crew

Pete Mapes

### Teens are social

- Why else would they come to meetings? - 'gag'
- Social behavior drives Crew performance
- People need to like and respect each other
- Avoid drama, consider a 'no dating' rule
  - In a great Crew, Venturers are genderless
- Really need to plan to include Jamborees into Crew Program
  - Occur every 2 years - alternate National and World
  - World Jamborees
    - Roughly 170 Scouting Nations participate
    - Oriented around 'cultures'
    - Designed as 'peace rallies'
    - Huge fun
    - 2019 in West Virginia at The Summit
    - First time in USA since 1967
    - Hosted by Mexico, USA & Canada
    - Registration began 1 Nov 2017
    - Only 7,200 US Scouts and Venturers can attend
    - 2023 in South Korea
  - National Jamboree
    - Every 4 years - 2021, 2025, 2029, etc
    - Oriented around 'program'
    - Designed to be a national Scouting party
    - Huge fun
    - At 'The Summit' in West Virginia
    - Venturers traditionally camp in Sub-Camp Foxtrot
- Summer is the time when many teens, particularly younger teens from families of lower economic means, languish
  - Don't 'die' during the summer!
  - Ramp up program
- Go to Venturing Summer Camp
  - Check out Goshen Scout Reservations (GSR) Camps Bowman and Marriott
  - Do Len'hoksin (at GSR) as a Crew
  - Low cost alternative to Philmont requiring less time and travel money if you are east of the Mississippi
- Plan a Crew Summer Adventure Trip
- Go to NYLT, NAYLE, High Adventure
- Make going back to school seem like a boring vacation

# Large Crews

## CSI - Death of a Crew

Pete Mapes

### Lack of leadership training

- Venturers may not be able to lead if they don't learn how
- Know and execute the Venturing leadership continuum for ALL
  - ◆ Personal Safety Training - within 1 month of joining
  - ◆ Crew Officer Orientation - within 1 month of joining
  - ◆ Introduction to Leadership Skills for Crews - ILS(C)
    - Within 3 months of joining
  - ◆ National Youth Leadership Training - NYLT
    - Within a year of joining
  - ◆ National Advanced Youth Leadership Experience - NAYLE
    - Optional but recommended within 2 years of joining
- Venturers should be teaching the ALPS courses to each other
  - ◆ Goal Setting & Time Management
  - ◆ Project Management
  - ◆ Mentoring
  - ◆ If you can't do this in a small Crew, get it at Venturing functions and University of Scouting
- Venturers should be teaching ILS(C) at least ever 6 months & preferably every 3 months to each other
  - ◆ ILS(C) is designed to be taught every time a new leadership team takes over and on demand

### Lack of leadership practice

- Crews should rotate activity chairmanship through ALL Venturers
- Crew Leadership Team puts the annual program in place
- Individual Venturers organize the activities
  - ◆ The Leadership Team does not
- This builds leadership throughout the Crew
- Need to include National High Adventure
  - ◆ Philmont and Northern Tier create experienced leaders
  - ◆ Sea Base and Summit Program are largely 'Disney'
  - ◆ Include Len'hoksin at Goshen Scout Reservation
    - Excellent Philmont-like experience if you avoid the 'Disney' aspects that hold you to the lake
    - Bring your own food supplements, provided food is inadequate for high energy demand activities like full days of backpacking
    - Bring your own maps and get 'out there'
      - Download and laminate the Goshen, VA quadrangle and adjacent quadrangles you plan to hike.
- Crews need to grow to at least 22 active Venturers to generate enough leadership experience to stay healthy

# Large Crews

## CSI - Death of a Crew

Pete Mapes

### Recruiting

- Restrictive Models impact recruiting and damage program potential
  - ◆ Some unit models can limit or damage Crews
    - The 'All girls' model
- The 'All church/All guys' model (LDS failure)
- The specialty Crew model
  - ◆ This is an Explorer Post, not a Crew
  - ◆ A narrow specialty limits membership
- The shared Troop Committee model
  - ◆ The Committee can only effectively serve one unit, generally the Crew loses to the Troop

### Lack of Recruiting

- #1 reason for lack of adequate recruiting is that the program is not as fun as other stuff teens can do
  - ◆ Venturing has to compete
- #2 reason for lack of recruiting is that Crews are too small
  - ◆ Small Crews have small programs
  - ◆ Small programs don't sound fun
  - ◆ More people do not come
- If you don't recruit, the Crew dies
  - ◆ This is why small Crews die every 4 years
  - ◆ But it all goes back to program, not Crew size
    - ◆ If you have great program, your Crew will Grow

### Lack of adult support

- A high performing, small Crew, committed to growth **MUST** have 5 camping adults
- Adult genders **MUST** be balanced
- Adult leaders must be fit
  - ◆ Cannot look like some of our Scoutmasters
  - ◆ Scoutmasters can get away with obesity because they run program for 11 year olds
  - ◆ Advisors have to be able to keep up with active young adults aged 14 thru 20
    - Work out and go on a diet - or die trying
- Adults **MUST** be trained
  - ◆ Current National BSA Venturing training is inadequate
    - Because the National model for a Crew doesn't work
  - Training on how to help with Venturing advancement is inadequate as well - so Venturers don't advance

# Large Crews

## CSI - Death of a Crew

Pete Mapes

### Lack of adult support (Continued)

- Adults must get:
  - ◆ Position specific training
  - ◆ Introduction to Outdoor Leadership Skills - IOLS
  - ◆ Woodbadge - to learn patrol method
  - ◆ Safety training
    - like weather hazard, driver safety, safe swim defense, paddle safety - and on and on and on
- Adults must be able to deal with their fears
  - ◆ Adults unable to take 'safe' risks can kill a program
  - ◆ May be able to recruit specialty adults, like spelunkers to deal with specific high risk, high stress activities

### Want to know more?

Go to the Crew 27 Crown Jewels and read about an effective program from articles written by the Venturers themselves:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/0B0yUcIfLkpRvRXhHMU51c1dIR2s>

### In summary:

- Crews that prosper:
  - ◆ Have dedicated committees
  - ◆ Have well trained and experienced adult advisors
  - ◆ Have fully trained youth leaders
    - Have a built in youth training cycle
  - ◆ Have FUN & take acceptable risks
  - ◆ Provide youth lots of activity chairmanship experience
  - ◆ Stagger leadership cycles with program cycles
    - Always have most of next year on the schedule already
  - ◆ Incorporate advancement into program & succeed with it
    - RANGER
      - Consider recognizing 'Outdoor Bronze'
      - Even though it no longer exists nationally, you can recognize it in your Crew, District or Council
    - ALPS
      - Develop a patrol method - MiniCrews
        - 5 to 9 active Venturers per MiniCrew
        - Split at 10
        - Organize geographically so meetings are easier
        - Form an 'inactive MiniCrew' for Venturers who show up infrequently so leadership doesn't get bogged down trying to communicate with them
      - Have minimal restrictions
      - Are Co-ed and don't allow dating

Please remember, this is an outline, not an article! It is a bunch of opinions and proven techniques that have worked for some Crews. We hope you enjoyed it!

# Large Crews

Large Crews - Orderly Change of Youth Leadership

By Pete Mapes

**INTRODUCTION:** The orderly change of leadership is essential to the government of the United States and it is equally essential in the life of the Venturing Crew. Small Crews of 5 to 15 Venturers have a relatively easy time of it. They know everyone and the leadership positions are limited in scope because the number of members served is relatively small. The large crew is a 'horse' of a completely different color.



**ABOUT CREW 27:** Crew 27 in the National Capital Area Council finished last year with 82 registered Venturers. After recharter, that number narrowed to a mere 69 after the departures for college and loss of interest took their toll. Fifty-four of the 69 remaining are assigned to six MiniCrews and 15 are in a group of registered Venturers we refer to as 'inactive.' The inactive Venturers want to maintain their association with the Crew and participate to some degree but cannot be active enough to participate in the life of the "MiniCrews."

Crew 27 currently has six active MiniCrews. Each MiniCrew is 'patrol sized', generally with five to ten Venturers assigned to it. The MiniCrews meet regularly outside of Crew 27 meetings, plan their own events and have their own program. A MiniCrew Guide (Leader) in Crew 27 is like a Crew President in a 'normal' Crew. Here are the demographics on our current Venturing MiniCrew & Inactive organization.

# Large Crews

## Large Crews - Orderly Change of Youth Leadership By Pete Mapes

| Unit      | Male | Female | Venturer | Discovery | Pathfinder | Summit | Outdoor-Bronze | Ranger |
|-----------|------|--------|----------|-----------|------------|--------|----------------|--------|
| A         | 4    | 5      | 5        | 2         | 1          | 0      | 0              | 1      |
| B         | 5    | 7      | 9        | 1         | 0          | 1*     | 2              | 1*     |
| C         | 2    | 6      | 6        | 1         | 0          | 0      | 2              | 1      |
| D         | 3    | 6      | 6        | 0         | 1*         | 0      | 1*             | 0      |
| E         | 4    | 5      | 4        | 3*        | 1          | 0      | 1*             | 1      |
| F         | 2    | 5      | 7        | 0         | 0          | 0      | 0              | 0      |
| Inactives | 12   | 3      | 9        | 2         | 0          | 0      | 0              | 3      |
|           | 32   | 37     | 46       | 9         | 3          | 1      | 6              | 7      |

\* Same person in each row

**Note:** Not included in this tabulation are 2 Silver Award holders and 9 Eagle Scouts

As you can see, MiniCrew B either needs to split or spin off some people to the 'inactive' list.

The MiniCrews elect their own leaders (MiniCrew Guides) and the Crew President convenes the 6 guides as the Crew Leadership Council on a monthly basis to handle the business of the Crew. This is identical to the function of the Patrol Leader's Council in a Troop. The President is the Chief Executive and only votes to break a tie. Each MiniCrew has an elected or appointed assistant leader (Also a MiniCrew Guide) who can stand in for the principal Guide if needed. Whether they are elected or appointed is determined by the elected MiniCrew Leader (Principal Guide). If both are busy, the MiniCrew can send any member to the CLC to vote the intentions of the MiniCrew. MiniCrew Guides are really important and they run the Crew as a whole as well as their own MiniCrew.

**ELECTING THE NEW PRESIDENT:** The first order of business at the elections meeting are the nominations from the floor. This year everyone pretty well knew who the incipient President was because she had such a distinguished year as Vice President. After she was nominated and seconded, no more nominations were received.



# Large Crews

Large Crews - Orderly Change of Youth Leadership

By Pete Mapes

Her speech as a candidate follows in bold italics:

***"Good Evening Crew 27. As many of you already know I am Mel. For the past year I have served mainly as Crew 27's Vice President of Program but for the future year I would like to be your president. Aside from VP Program I have led the crew on a shooting sports trip, on two ILSC training days and last but not least the most accomplished two weeks at Goshen the crew has ever had.***

***I joined the Crew when I was 13. I found out about it from my older brother Garrett. After hearing about all the awesome adventures he was going on and seeing how many friends he was making I decided this Venturing Crew was for me as well. I went to my first meeting and witnessed a basement full of people who were all so friendly to me and so organized what with their different positions and mini crews. Crew 27 has lived up to those expectations and gone beyond. We have seen three scouts in the past year earn their Ranger, we have gone to a high adventure base the past two summers and are excited to go to Sea Base this coming summer, and through all of this have continued to be the friendly, down-to-earth yet intense (haha) crew I witnessed when I was thirteen.***

***These achievements are physical and easily measurable. However, Crew 27 also has more subjective impacts. The active scouts of the crew learn life skills of cooking, leadership, accountability and communication, they support each other in times of grief, and they support each other in endeavors outside of scouting like sports and drama. The crew also introduces youth to many inspiring adults ranging from our advisors, committee, and parents to special guests that come and speak to us. Where else would I meet a Tuskegee Airmen?***

***Outside of our monthly crew meetings, Crew 27 does other incredible things as big as attending the World Scout Jamboree in Japan to as small as day-trips. In addition to these monthly adventures, most everyone participates in the leadership skill trainings that the BSA has to offer; Introduction to Leadership Skills, National Youth Leadership Training, and National Advanced Youth Leadership Experience (NAYLE). My combined completion of these trainings, makes me feel confident in my aptitude for serving as your President. They teach you skills of communication, you network with similar scouts from all over, you learn how to work through difficulties in a mature way and more.***

***As president my vision for Crew 27 is to continue to be an exemplary crew. To me this means activities every month that have a purpose, have more than a few scouts attending them, fundraising more per scout than we did last year and have at least 70 registered scouts when we recharter at the end of the year. When we don't fundraise people who would love to go on trips and we would love to have on trips can't go. Simple fact. Secondly in order to have purposeful, popular activities the activity planning process needs to be refined. Each activity needs to be promoted sufficiently, be planned in a timely manner, RSVPed to . . . DAD . . . and get the information about their trip in front of the committee three months in advance. In order to do this, a clearer step-by-step standard operating procedure must be published on TroopTrack.***

# Large Crews

Large Crews - Orderly Change of Youth Leadership

By Pete Mapes

*Thirdly we need to continue membership growth. As people join, people graduate so we can never let up. We can make recruiting as well as fundraising fun, strategic, and effective as long as everybody participates. Popcorn does not have to be our only big fundraiser.*

*As VP this past year, I have attended CLCs and committee meetings regularly and through this have gained a real respect for Amy's hard work and dedication to our crew. I hope to continue Crew 27's legacy of great presidents and together we can. Thank you."*

**THE PRESIDENTIAL VOTE:** The Crew had a quorum of 45 Venturers present (out of 69) and the secret ballot was unanimous in favor of the nominee.



**ELECTING THE MINICREW GUIDES:** The next order of business were the Mini-Crew Leaders (Guides). The six MiniCrews each picked a portion of the large meeting area and held their elections for their Guides. Since the current Venturing Handbook doesn't contain a patrol method and since there is no Venturing insignia for a patrol leader equivalent, Crew 27 calls its MiniCrew Leaders 'Guides' and uses the pre-1958 youth leadership insignia. Each of the MiniCrews elected their leader and then the leader and the MiniCrew conspired to either elect or appoint their assistants.

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**APPOINTING THE STAFF:** The new Crew President now had two weeks to interview and appoint the VP-Admin, VP-Program and the other Crew officers (Secretary, Quartermaster, Historian, Treasurer and Webmaster). The first meeting in February would be the occasion for the new officers and staff to get sworn in.

**ORGANIZING THE CREW SCHEDULE:** Crew 27 plans a schedule a year at a time and the schedule is staggered with the election of officers. This is important because the new slate of officers arrive on duty in February with a published schedule already coordinated with the Crew Committee through the end of August. They do not have to panic to immediately plan and execute a new Crew Program immediately upon arriving in office. Instead, the conduct an all day planning meeting and develop the subsequent schedule that runs from the end of August through the end of the August after that. That schedule gets presented to the Committee at the March Committee meeting.

**INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS:** The annual installation of officers is quite the party. It occurs on the first meeting in February, right after the new charter takes effect. The Crew has its winter awards ceremony followed by the installation of officers. The Crew then moves to the common room where they have a 'pot luck' dinner and an inspirational speaker. This year they were treated to Colonel Martha Lenhart, USA, MC (Retired). Dr. Lenhart had a very distinguished career serving our country. Her specialty is orthopedic surgery of the hand. She deployed twice as the Chief of Surgery into the area of responsibility. Once to Baghdad, Iraq and a second time to Mosul, Afghanistan. The Crew was completely spellbound as we listened to her tell us about surgeries on children who comprised most of her patients as they tangled with land mines left in Afghanistan over decades of conflict. Nearly every Venturer in the room wanted to enlist and help!



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Thus ended the orderly change of leadership in Crew 27 for another year! Now the Crew is ready to get back to having fun with a host of stupendous activities. Let's go Venturing!

