

”It’s A Great Day For Scouting”

VI. Retention/Who Comes First

In 1993, the new CC (Council Commissioner) created a new position, the ACC (Assistant Council Commissioner) for retention, and he chose me to fill that position, which I am still today. He then asked me to find the district that lost the most scouts and find out why. I didn’t need the time to find out why, having been a Unit Leader since 1970, and also being a commissioner since 1978, I already knew why youth drop out of scouting. It is either they didn’t like the programs being offered, or there was no program being offered at all. I then went to the DCs and asked them to find the leaders that offered good programs by looking at units that have advancements on a regular basis, and find a special way to recognize them. I then contacted our Council’s FID (Field Director) to go with me to that one district that lost the most youth, DC’s monthly staff meeting, on a hunch.

At that meeting the FD and I out-numbered the commissioners that were there, because the DC didn’t make that meeting mandatory for fear of losing them. I remember when I became the DC for the Frontier District in the 1980’s, I made my staff meeting mandatory, many members left their position not because they were mad about my decision, but because of their careers, they couldn’t go to the meetings, which also would be true about unit visitations. I then had two longtime UCs who admitted they had not done unit visitations because they felt those units were self-sufficient. SO, I promoted one to ADC, and I then assisted him in recruiting UCs and in making unit visits, which he saw how to be a friend of the unit, and not as someone looking for problems. Then with the help of our DE (District Executive) and the District Training Chair, we develop a training program for our new UCs. That ADC and several UCs are still involved in scouting today. I knew then and still do today that we have to first retain leaders with good programs to retain our scouts.