

Leadership

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PROBLEM SOLVING AND DECISION MAKING

PROBLEM SOLVING

In training designs where participants are seen as being responsible for their own learning and where a flexible approach to the learning is being used, or in situations where a variety of choice is offered to a number of people opposing views are likely to occur.

Other problem areas inevitably arise whenever people come together to work in group situations and individuals themselves have problems that must be handled.

Problem solving is a term often applied to a systematic method used by an individual or a group of people to analyze a situation and to determine a course of action to be taken.

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While good relationships among the members of a group is of primary importance, the progress that the group or an individual is able to make in the solution of difficult problems may be improved greatly by the acceptance and use of a systematic approach.

There are a number of ways in which the problem-to-solution sequence has been expressed. These methods have a common base which might be summarized in a problem solving check list.

Problem Solving Check List —

DEFINE THE PROBLEM

GET THE FACTS

IDENTIFY CAUSES

PROPOSE SOLUTIONS

TEST SOLUTIONS AGAINST CRITERIA

CHOOSE BEST ACTION (SOLUTION)

IMPLEMENT AND CONTROL DECISION

It is not suggested that a group or individual needs to follow this pattern of thought formally to deal with every problem encountered. However, problems of great significance, complex problems, or those which give difficulty for any reason, will yield good solutions more readily when such a sequence is used. It is, therefore, helpful to discuss the procedure, practice it on a simple problem, and display the check list for use if and when appropriate application arises. Discussion and practice should be sufficient to assure a common understanding of the items of the check list.

There are a number of subtle and helpful aspects to each of the items in the check list.

Define the Problem

- Separate it from other problems and extraneous material.
- Contain the problem; limit its scope; define it in written form.

Get the Facts

- All of them
- What facts show there is a problem?
- Where, how frequently, and under what circumstances do these facts apply?

Identify Causes

- What are the underlying causes of the facts which indicate there is a problem?

Propose Solutions

- What must be done to remove the causes - or offset their effects?
- Any plausible solution should be noted initially.
- Possible solutions may be revealed by sifting the facts.

Test Solutions Against Criteria

- Some implications of some solutions may rule them out on preliminary examination.
- Gather all the facts which have a bearing on the remaining solutions until there is an adequate basis for solution.
- In difficult cases, it may be necessary to organize and weigh such facts in exhaustive detail. Is each fact accurate, reliable, relevant, objective, correctly weighed, crucial?
- Evaluate each possible solution.
- Think critically in future.
- Use available facts.

Criteria for testing alternatives:

- Is the solution I am now considering the simplest?
- Is it the most economical in time, space, resources and the effort of the people involved?
- Is it the most flexible?
- Does it best take into account co-operation among the people involved and with other people or groups?

- Does it afford the highest degree of security, which is to say does it contain least risk of failure?
 - Does it fully satisfy the conditions for the problem's solution?
- Verify that the conclusion is not prematurely drawn by reason of failure to examine all significant facts or failure to bring conclusion into accord with available facts.

Choose Best Action

- Select the best solution and act on it.

Implement and Control Decision

- Separate responsibility for decision and action as little as possible.
- Responsibility must be clear.
- Establish controls to indicate progress.

PROBLEM SOLVING - A STEP BY STEP APPROACH

Over the years a generalized problem solving procedure has developed. The procedure seems to be universal for all types of problems; scientific, mathematical, human. The "problem with problem solving" is that many of us know and practice the procedure in one part of our lives (school work, mechanical aspects on-the-job), but not in other parts of our lives (e.g. relations with other people). We seem unable or unwilling to make the transfer of a workable procedure of problem solving from one type of situation to what appears to be a totally different type of situation.

One reason is we may not really know and understand the procedure and recognize its portability. Another is our aversion to apply to people in an organization like Scouting, a process we usually associate with things. On the other hand, there is the natural danger of reducing people and "people problems" to numbers, things and stiff mechanical process. In emphasizing the problem solving process, it is not the intention to reduce people to things. In fact, the point is to retain and enhance the human aspect of people problems.

The process that follows involves seven steps. You will notice the steps are numbered. The reason for this is because the steps "should be developed in this sequence". Frequently, one starts with a solution and then rushes around looking for a problem to solve! For reasons like this we should really define the problem carefully before arriving at a solution. A "too-early" solution may not be really solving the intended problem and may inhibit the development of good ideas.

Later, generate all possible solutions before making a final decision, in order not to overlook any possibilities. Subsequently, look at the pros and cons of each proposed solution. Then, make a conscious effort to discard the poorer solutions and to reach for the better ones. It may be wise, however, to assess whether some of the poorer solutions may have application in certain special situations before discarding them completely. Your final decision should be tested to see the consequences.

Should you slavishly follow the problem solving steps in sequence? This is a decision which has to be worked out through experience. If things are going well in your problem solving you may easily find you are out-of-step with the sequence. On the other hand, if things are not going well, you may have to go back to the sequence. One rule of thumb may help. If you are solution oriented too soon, try to develop a problem orientation. When you are hung up on the problem stage, try to develop a solution orientation.

ADAPTING PROBLEM SOLVING TO DISCUSSION LEADING

One application of problem solving is to use the step-by-step approach as a guide to group discussion. If you serve as a discussion leader, you may find the following guide of assistance. In the left hand column is a summary of the steps. In the right hand column are sample questions designed to develop the various steps and help the group keep on track.

PROBLEM SOLVING STEPS	SAMPLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
1. & 2. Identifying the problem and examining the facts.	What are we to discuss? What does the item mean? What else should we look at?
3. Looking at causes (discarding symptoms).	How do these things happen?
4. Proposing tentative solutions.	What are the various ways the situation can be dealt with?
5. Testing and evaluating the consequences.	What are the possible outcomes of handling the situation in this way? What can go right? What can go wrong?
6. Selecting the best alternative (making the decision).	What would seem to be our best solution?
7. Implementing and controlling decision.	Who should do it? How? What are the ways we can learn from this decision?

TROOP RESOURCE SURVEY

Boy Scouting is for adults as well as boys. We invite you to offer your skills and interests so the best possible program can be developed for the Boy Scouts in this troop. In making this survey the committee wishes to find ways you can enjoy using your talents to help our Scouts. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Welcome to the Scout family of Troop No. _____ in the _____ Council.

Please return this survey to _____.

(Please print)

Name _____ Home phone _____

Street address _____ Business phone _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

1. What is your favorite hobby? _____
2. In what sports do you take an active part? _____
3. Would you be willing to assist the troop leaders and committee members occasionally? _____
4. Please check the areas in which you would be willing to help.

General Activities

- Campouts
- Hikes
- Outdoor activities
- Troop meetings
- Swimming supervision
- Bookkeeping
- Typing
- Drawing/art
- Transportation of Scouts
- Transportation of equipment
- Other _____

Please Print

Special Program Assistance

- I can participate in boards of review.
- I have a station wagon or _____ truck.
- I have a workshop.
- I have family camping gear.
- I have access to a cottage.
- I have access to camping property.
- I can make contacts for special trips and activities.
- I can help with troop equipment.

5. Please check any Scout skills you would be willing to teach.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ropework | <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Outdoor cooking | <input type="checkbox"/> Edible plants |
| <input type="checkbox"/> First aid | <input type="checkbox"/> Knife and ax |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Star study | <input type="checkbox"/> Citizenship |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Map and compass | <input type="checkbox"/> Camping |

Check the list of merit badges on the other side of this sheet that you are willing to help our Boy Scouts earn.

MERIT BADGES

January 1984

Check the subjects that you can help Boy Scouts earn.

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> American Business | <input type="checkbox"/> Farm Mechanics | <input type="checkbox"/> Pioneering |
| <input type="checkbox"/> American Cultures | <input type="checkbox"/> Fingerprinting | <input type="checkbox"/> Plant Science |
| <input type="checkbox"/> American Heritage | <input type="checkbox"/> Firemanship | <input type="checkbox"/> Plumbing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Animal Science | <input type="checkbox"/> First Aid | <input type="checkbox"/> Pottery |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Archery | <input type="checkbox"/> Fish and Wildlife Management | <input type="checkbox"/> Printing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Fishing | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Health |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Food Systems | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Speaking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Astronomy | <input type="checkbox"/> Forestry | <input type="checkbox"/> Pulp and Paper |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Athletics | <input type="checkbox"/> Gardening | <input type="checkbox"/> Rabbit Raising |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Atomic Energy | <input type="checkbox"/> Genealogy | <input type="checkbox"/> Radio |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aviation | <input type="checkbox"/> General Science | <input type="checkbox"/> Railroading |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Backpacking | <input type="checkbox"/> Geology | <input type="checkbox"/> Reading |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Basketry | <input type="checkbox"/> Golf | <input type="checkbox"/> Reptile Study |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Beekeeping | <input type="checkbox"/> Handicapped Awareness | <input type="checkbox"/> Rifle and Shotgun Shooting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bird Study | <input type="checkbox"/> Hiking | <input type="checkbox"/> Rowing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bookbinding | <input type="checkbox"/> Home Repairs | <input type="checkbox"/> Safety |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Botany | <input type="checkbox"/> Horsemanship | <input type="checkbox"/> Salesmanship |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bugling | <input type="checkbox"/> Indian Lore | <input type="checkbox"/> Scholarship |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Camping | <input type="checkbox"/> Insect Life | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Canoeing | <input type="checkbox"/> Journalism | <input type="checkbox"/> Signaling |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chemistry | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Skating |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Citizenship in the Community | <input type="checkbox"/> Law | <input type="checkbox"/> Skiing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Citizenship in the Nation | <input type="checkbox"/> Leatherwork | <input type="checkbox"/> Small-Boat Sailing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Citizenship in the World | <input type="checkbox"/> Lifesaving | <input type="checkbox"/> Soil and Water Conservation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Coin Collecting | <input type="checkbox"/> Machinery | <input type="checkbox"/> Space Exploration |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Mammals | <input type="checkbox"/> Sports |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Computers | <input type="checkbox"/> Masonry | <input type="checkbox"/> Stamp Collecting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Consumer Buying | <input type="checkbox"/> Metals Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Surveying |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cooking | <input type="checkbox"/> Metalwork | <input type="checkbox"/> Swimming |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cycling | <input type="checkbox"/> Model Design and Building | <input type="checkbox"/> Textile |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dentistry | <input type="checkbox"/> Motorboating | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dog Care | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | <input type="checkbox"/> Traffic Safety |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drafting | <input type="checkbox"/> Nature | <input type="checkbox"/> Truck Transportation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Electricity | <input type="checkbox"/> Oceanography | <input type="checkbox"/> Veterinary Science |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Electronics | <input type="checkbox"/> Orienteering | <input type="checkbox"/> Water Skiing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency Preparedness | <input type="checkbox"/> Painting | <input type="checkbox"/> Weather |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy | <input type="checkbox"/> Personal Fitness | <input type="checkbox"/> Wilderness Survival |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Personal Management | <input type="checkbox"/> Wood Carving |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Science | <input type="checkbox"/> Pets | <input type="checkbox"/> Woodwork |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Farm and Ranch Management | <input type="checkbox"/> Photography | |

PATROL RESOURCE SURVEY SHEETS

NAME _____ DATE _____

AGE _____ BIRTHDATE _____

ADDRESS _____ PHONE _____

I. PROGRESS DATES (include Cub & Scout Ranks and Troop # or Pack #)

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

D. _____

E. _____

F. _____

II. SPECIAL OFFICES & RESPONSIBILITIES HELD (such as scribe, APL, etc.)

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

III. FAMILY INFORMATION

A. Other scouts in the family.

B. Other adult leaders in the family

C. Mother's name Occup.

D. Father's name Occup.

E. Brother's name 1. age School
2.

F. Sister's name 1. age School
2.

IV. HOBBIES & ACTIVITIES

V. HEALTH PROBLEMS OR HANDICAPS

VI. THREE THINGS I LIKE MOST IN THIS LIFE ARE:

A. _____
B. _____
C. _____

THREE THINGS I LIKE LEAST ARE:

A. _____
B. _____
C. _____

VII. WHAT I WANT MOST FROM SCOUTING IS:

A. _____
B. _____
C. _____

VIII. WHAT I WANT TO GIVE TO SCOUTING IS:

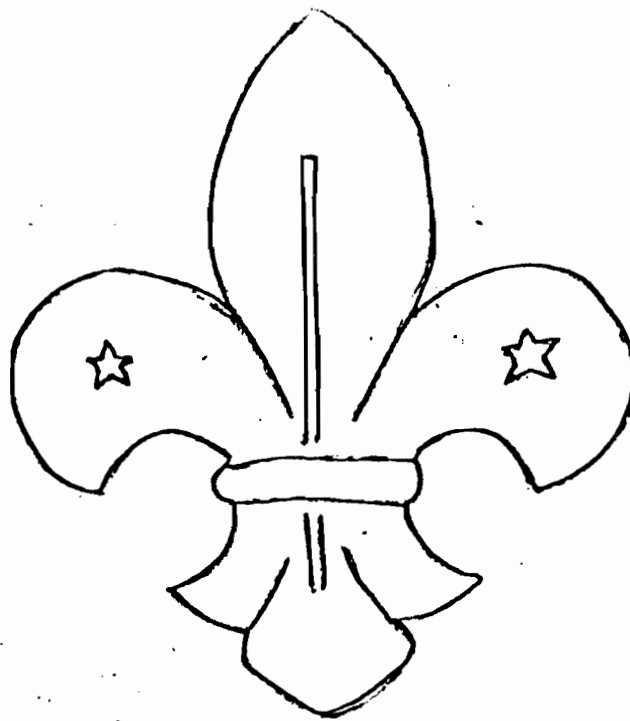
A. _____
B. _____
C. _____

IX. WHAT I LIKED LEAST ABOUT SCOUTING SO FAR IS:

A. _____
B. _____
C. _____

X. WHAT I LIKED MOST ABOUT SCOUTING SO FAR IS:

A. _____
B. _____
C. _____



The actual meaning to be read from the Scout's fleur-de-lis badge is that it points in the right direction (and upwards), turning neither to the right nor the left, since these lead backward again. The three sections represent the three parts of the promise—Duty to God and the Queen; Help Others; Obey the Scout Law.

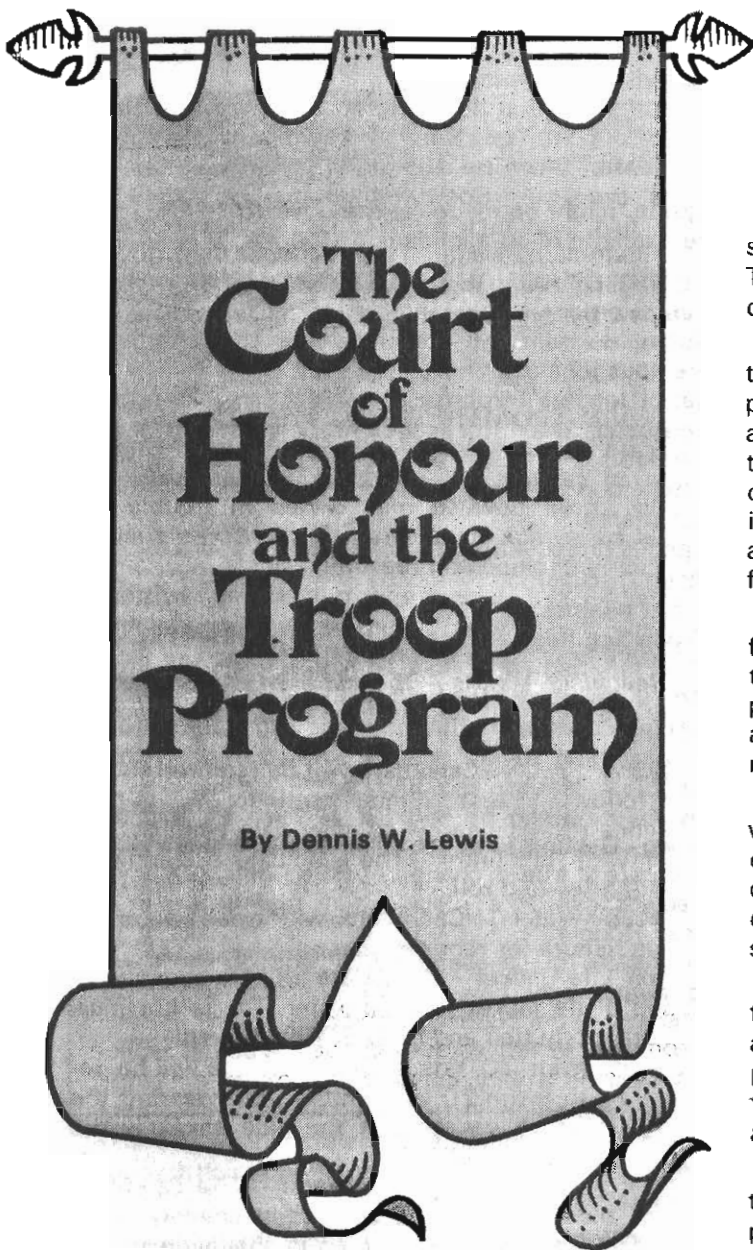
The two five-pointed stars are sometimes called the "eyes" of the Scout. The ten points on the two stars represent the ten Scout laws.

The "Be Prepared" band binding the sections stands for the bond of brotherhood among some nine million Scouts in 145 countries on six continents.

Court of Honour Code

It is the duty of each member of this Court of Honour:

1. To set a good example in living the Scout Promise and Law.
2. To uphold the Honour and Tradition of the Troop.
3. To consider the wishes of his Patrol before his own.
4. To be fair and just in making all judgments.
5. To abide cheerfully by the decision of the majority.
6. To respect the secrecy of the Court of Honour discussions.
7. To loyally assist the Scouters in the efficient operation of the Troop.



The Court of Honour and the Troop Program

By Dennis W. Lewis

With the patrol as its basic unit, the Boy Scout section has always focused on patrol activities. In the past patrols operated with varying degrees of success and, while most troops had patrols, much of the program was operated on a troop basis. Those troops who did operate a successful patrol system found the Court of Honour an ideal place for the patrol leaders, and possibly seconds, to meet together with the Scouters to discuss patrol and troop programs.

Whether we now call it a Court of Honour, patrol representation, or a patrol leaders' council matters little. It is the operation of the patrol, and the opportunity given to the boy leaders of patrols, to meet at the troop level with adults, that really matters.

The patrol has been referred to as: "A small group of boys working together under the leadership of one of their own number. The Scout patrol is democracy at work on a small scale."

Baden-Powell's reference to patrol representation in troop affairs made the point that: "It is not so much to save trouble for the Scoutmaster as to give responsibility to the boys."

Patrols usually consist of a group of friends of the same age and with similar interests and abilities. The patrol compares to a team in sports - a group of people working together in an activity they enjoy.

The Scout program still focuses on patrol activities. However, there is value in group life with other patrols and in programs as a troop. Patrol representation and troop programs can still best be handled through the Court of Honour, patrol leaders' council or a troop committee. The program for troop meetings is best developed by Scouts - with the assistance of Scouters. Some troops assign responsibility for troop meetings to patrols, on a rotation basis.

As with patrol meetings, the troop meeting should focus on activities that interest members of the troop. Representatives on the Court of Honour, or the patrol responsible, should try to plan troop programs around the interests of the members. This doesn't mean, of course, that new ideas can't be tried.

The Court of Honour should not be bogged down with administrative routine matters. The troop Scouter is responsible to the group sponsor and group committee for the troop. He co-ordinates the work of the Scout counsellors and, with them, is responsible for troop program and troop administration.

The troop program should **add** to the programs of the patrols, because patrols can have their representatives speak for them. Thus boys will have the opportunity to discuss and present the views of those they represent, as they work with adults and arrive at decisions.

The Court of Honour can help Scouters to assess the needs and interests of the boys. It can be a place for an exchange of ideas by patrols, where a co-operative approach can be made for community resources; where Scouters and boy leaders can focus on program goals and learn to share the leadership role.

Troop programs can cover a number of interests:

- camps, hikes, visits, tours, adventure schemes
- fun nights, sports, games night
- sharing resources: films, speakers
- demonstrations, special instruction and special schemes
- displays, presentations or ceremonial nights
- competition or challenge nights between patrols

There are also many ideas for troop meetings in the Achievement Badge requirements.

The Court of Honour doesn't have to be a formal affair to get work done. Everything done with this group is training and education of some sort and a leader's enthusiasm is essential. One of the greatest satisfactions for a troop Scouter comes when his boy leaders start developing their patrols and the Court of Honour into a smooth-running operation.

Few Scouts have had experience running their own affairs. Many come from situations where all decisions are made by adults; few have had any op-

portunity to express themselves to adults, test values and make decisions.

"Patience" is the key word. If we are really interested in helping our Scouts grow we must have patience. Things won't happen overnight. Early in the game, when boy leaders are asked to suggest things to do, they may respond with suggestions that are farfetched or impractical. Don't be disappointed! They may also be slow in any kind of response; they may want to test us first to see whether we really mean what we say. Some boys may have reason to distrust adults, and when they are suddenly faced by someone who promises to help them "do their own thing" and stand by their decisions, they may play it cool. It will take ingenuity and patience to get young people into the habit of making suggestions, then voting on them and assuming their share of responsibility for carrying out what the majority decides.

They also have to learn how to represent others and find out whether we are really listening to their concerns.

These are all steps in the learning of self-government by Scouts.

The Court of Honour operation should be lightly structured in terms of the business to be handled. Our aim should be to establish a boy chairman (for a set period of meetings or where boys take turns - whatever suits the situation). In a young troop, the Scouter may have to do a little more work to get things going, but he must take care not to "take over" permanently.

Some simple rules for operation should be established. The role of the chairman should be understood by all members and a periodic review made to keep members aware of the chairman's function.

A few guidelines might also be drafted but there is no need to burden Scouts with heavy documents of constitutions and/or by-laws; this could blow the whole thing. A model structure of a meeting agenda,

as a guide, might be made for the boys to follow.

One example of an agenda is as follows:

COURT OF HONOUR MEETING AGENDA

1. Call to order — chairman.
2. Business from the last meeting. (Reports on previous jobs assigned, etc.)
3. Patrol leaders' reports. (Scouters can take note here and listen for concerns or where help is needed.)
4. Next troop program activity: discussion and assignments.
5. Special projects and troop Scouter's report.
6. Open discussion.
7. Other business.
8. Troop Scouter's and counsellors' comments.
9. Next meeting and follow-up action.
10. Adjournment by the chairman.

Opening and closing the meetings can take various forms according to the wishes of the boys and the acceptable procedure established.

Any meeting can be killed if allowed to drag on too long. Dealing with program and establishing a level where a true exchange of views between boys and adults can take place are of main value in a Court of Honour.

The follow-up on assignments, and on the decisions made, may have to be done by the troop Scouter and patrol counsellors because many Scouts may be slow to follow through on the actual work. This would be a very important phase of development in the beginning because, while Scouts may fall short on assignments at the start, they will still look for progress at their next meeting which acts as an encouragement to continue.

Key consideration is to help these young people GROW. Time and skill are required of the adults involved. Growth won't take place overnight and it won't be easy. But then nothing worthwhile ever is easy, is it?

Troop Specialty Badge

In a future issue of *The Canadian Leader* it is hoped to exchange a number of Troop Specialty Badge programs with you. If you have a patrol or troop program outline for your Scout Specialty Badge, send it in. Please be brief. List program, number taking part and highlight requirements. Don't forget to add your troop number, town and province.

A number of requests to change the Troop Specialty Badge have been received. Suggestions have ranged from sewing name flashes (anchors) under the badge showing the specialty to providing the same badge in three different colours to cover at least three specialties per boy.

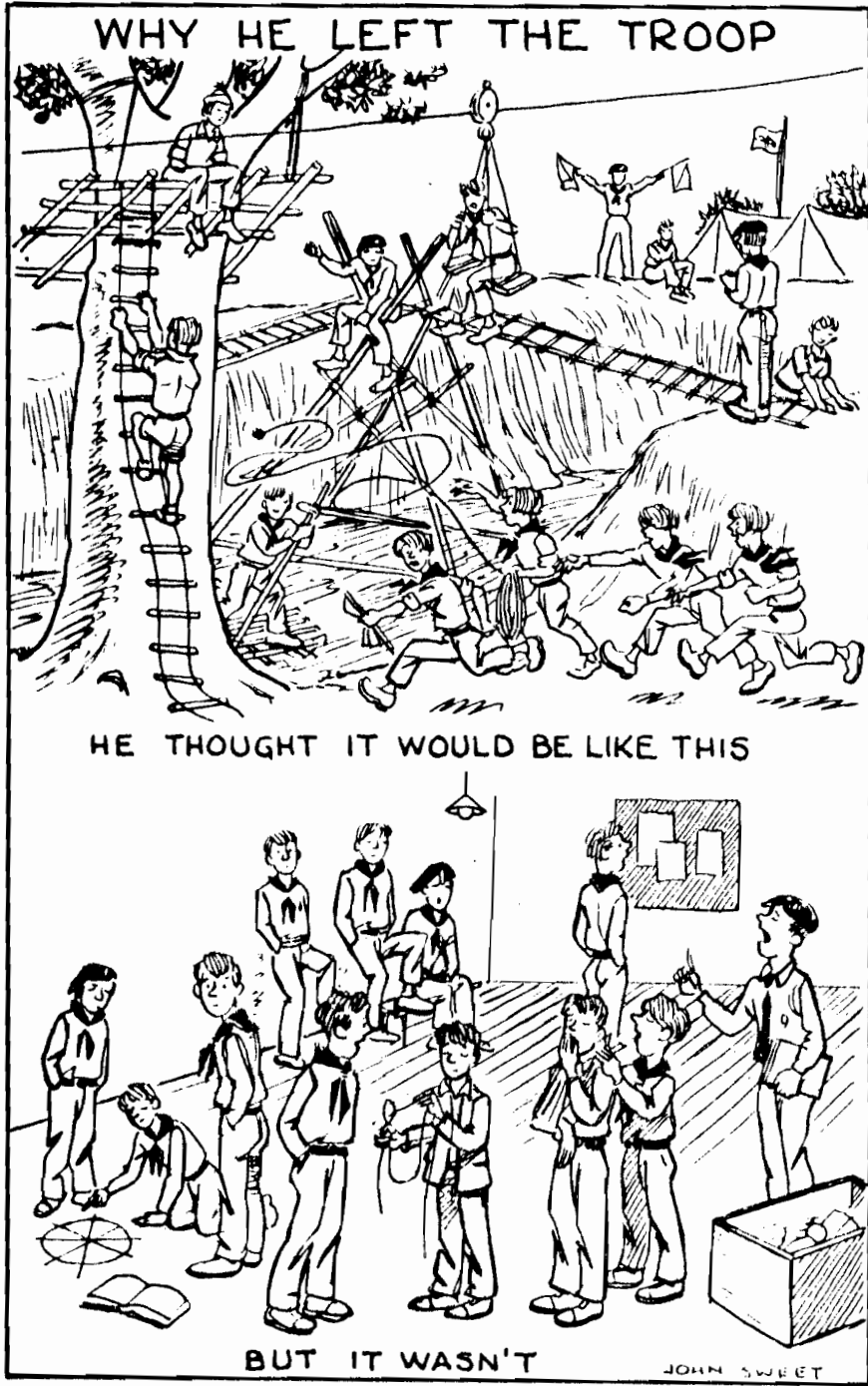
The anchors or activity name flashes are rather impractical for stock purposes because there are so many different activities.

The easiest and cheapest way may be to provide the same badge in three different colours. This would cover at least three different troop specialties during the years of a Scout in the troop.

Many troops have only one specialty. It may be camping or a special winter activity. Others like to change their specialty each year to provide a different challenge for the same boys who remain in the troop for several years.

What do you think of the three different colours for the same badge for those who have more than one specialty?

Write to: Program Services, Boy Scouts of Canada, National Headquarters, Box 5151, Station "F," Ottawa 5, Ontario.



TROOP, PATROL & COURT OF HONOUR

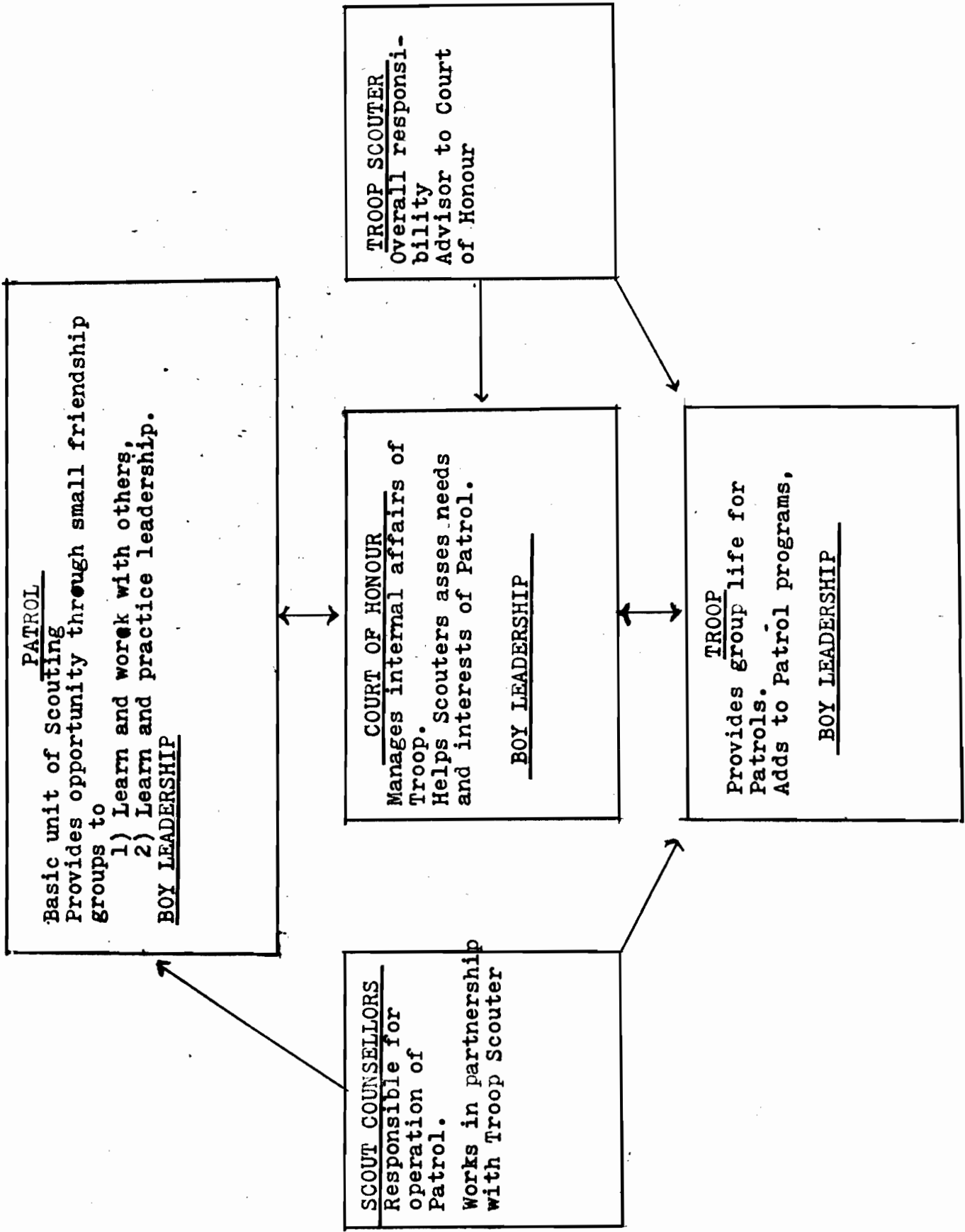


TABLE TO SHOW ORGANIZATION OF COURT OF HONOUR

THE GROUP COUNCIL AND THE GROUP COMMITTEE

	COURT OF HONOUR	GROUP COUNCIL	GROUP COMMITTEE
1. COMPOSITION	Patrol leaders - or 1 elected member of the Patrol T.S. in attendance as Advisor. Councillors on invitation.	All Group Scouters	MINIMUM - of 5 adults Parents of boys or other interested persons.
2. FORMATION	Become Members on appointment by Patrol	Become Members on Registration	Appointed by the sponsoring body with the approval of the District Council.
3. CHAIRMAN	P.L. or other Patrol Member elected by C. of H.	Elected by Group Council from among Group.	Elected by the Group Committee from their own numbers.
MEETING	Regular monthly formal. Possibly one short one after meeting of troop, or Patrol Meetings.	Regular monthly Informal.	Regular monthly formal.
5. FUNCTION	To guard honour of troop - suggest program of troop activities - internal-administration - troop finances. Watch progress in Badge work keep up troop tradition. Promote patrol activities by referring to other successful meetings.	Discuss - co-ordinate all matters re training of boys - joint events, use of HQ and equipment develop team spirit among Scouters.	Responsible for Group property - finances - public relations - camping - transportation to organize sections in group. To appoint scouters subject to District Council. Relieve Scouters of administration of group.
6. RECORDS	Notes of decisions kept by Scribe, Minutes of meetings, etc.	Notes of decisions and action taken - should be recorded.	Minutes of meeting kept. Letters - Accounts. Inventory, Rechartering, etc.

	COURT OF HONOUR	GROUP COUNCIL	GROUP COMMITTEE
7. FINANCE	Administer Patrol and troop funds	Operates through Group Committee - giving expected expenditures - suggest - purchases	Raises funds, operates group bank account. Authorizes - expenditures responsible to sponsor.
8. PROPERTY AND HEADQUARTERS	Uses and looks after.	Allocates use and safeguards from damage.	Responsible for care and safeguard of same. Purchase and maintain where necessary.
9. EQUIPMENT	Suggest needs, maintain same and further purchase.	Deals with allocation - use and care. Considers recommendations of Patrols.	Purchase - keep inventory through group council.
10. CAMPING	Suggest, sites, themes helps to run. Run own Patrol Camps.	Arranges and controls with G.C. approval.	Help locate sites. Help transport. Help finance.
11. RECRUITMENT OF SCOUTERS	Older boys briefed re future service, Venturers and Rovers.	Look out for suitable people. Recommends to Group Committee	Look out for suitable people who are willing. Recommend to District Commissioner.
12. TRAINING OF SCOUTERS	Attend older boy courses - and train own Patrols	Encourage and assists boys and leader to attend training courses	Help where needed financially.
13. PUBLICITY	Contributes by smartness and service to others and to be involved in lots of activities.	Provides the best - A good Group.	Publicity for Troop. Re instructors, examiners, Finance - group endeavours.

Learning About Volunteer Burnout

(It Can Improve Your
Retention Rate)

By Laurel Stulken Dean, Ph.D.

When you lose a volunteer, you not only lose a valuable resource, but you also lose the time you have invested. You must make new time to start the placement process over with a new volunteer. Knowing something about volunteer burnout can improve your volunteer retention rate.

Before you can begin to deal with the problem of volunteer turnover, you must clearly define the problem. Of the volunteers who leave, what percent left for one of the following reasons: employed full time, moved out of the area, cost of volunteering too high or burned out?

There are many reasons why volunteers leave an organization. Many of them we cannot control, i.e., moving to a new community, children no longer eligible for membership, volunteer job and new paying position conflict with specific hours. Thus,

managers of volunteer programs need to recognize that a certain percentage of volunteer turnover is totally out of their control. Once that percentage is defined, volunteer administrators can quit worrying about why those volunteers leave. Instead, you should realize that every year there will be a certain number of "replacement" volunteers to recruit.

There are several reasons, however, why volunteers leave an organization that a volunteer administrator can change. In a 1984 survey conducted by the California Cooperative Extension Service, the following were some of those controllable reasons cited by volunteers who discontinued service to the organization with which they had been involved:

- Support lacking from others (staff and volunteers) in the organization.
- Poor relationships with other volun-

teers and staff—general interpersonal problems.

- Lack of orderliness and honesty.
- Too busy with school, family, work.

The 80-20 Ratio

Is 80 percent of your time and efforts producing 20 percent of your results? If you have been attacking the wrong problems or spending time with the wrong volunteers, that is probably true for you.

As you evaluate your volunteers' work, you will likely find that 20 percent or less of your volunteers are producing 80 percent of the results. Which volunteers are you likely to miss the most if they leave the orga-

Laurel Dean is a 4-H youth specialist in the area of staff development and training at the Cooperative Extension Service/University of California, Berkeley.

nization due to burnout? Certainly one of those highly involved and productive volunteers.

Which volunteer is likely to be a candidate for burnout? Again the highly involved and productive volunteer.

So, if you believe in the 80-20 ratio, develop a plan of action that clearly defines that 20 percent of your time and energies will be directed toward training and supporting those volunteers who produce 80 percent of the results.

the heart of the burnout syndrome. A person gets overly involved emotionally, overextends himself or herself, and feels overwhelmed by the emotional demands imposed by other people. Once *emotional exhaustion* (one aspect of burnout) sets in, people feel they are no longer able to give of themselves to others. They want to reduce their contact with people to the bare minimum required to get the job done.

The development of this detached, callous and even dehuman-

Feeling negatively about others can progress until one feels down on oneself. At this point, a third aspect of burnout appears—a feeling of *reduced personal accomplishment*. With this feeling of failure and reduced self-esteem, depression may set in. Some will seek counseling for what they believe are their personal problems. Others will change for what they believe are their personal problems. Still others will change their volunteer jobs often to abandon any kind of work that brings them into stressful contact with people. Volunteers will either leave the organization or begin affecting others with their negative attitudes.

Maslach says we tend to see people as the cause of burnout rather than thinking in terms of *what* is causing burnout. Instead of focusing on just the people involved, we need to focus on the *situation* in which they find themselves.

"What sort of tasks are they expected to do and why?" Maslach writes. "In what setting do these activities take place? What limitations or constraints exist for them because of protocol, rules, standard operating procedures, and so forth? *Such a focus allows for the possibility that*

Once emotional exhaustion sets in, people feel they are no longer able to give of themselves to others.

Volunteer Burnout

Just what is "burnout"? It has all the signs of lack of motivation, but is that the case?

According to Christina Maslach, University of California, Berkeley, "Burnout is a syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who do 'people work' of some kind. It is a response to the chronic emotional strain of dealing extensively with other human beings, particularly when they are troubled or having problems. Thus, it can be considered one type of job stress. Although it has some of the same deleterious effects as other stress response, what is unique about burnout is that the stress arises from the *social* interaction between helper and recipient."

Emotional overload and subsequent emotional exhaustion are at

ized response signals a second aspect of the burnout syndrome—*depersonalization*. They begin to develop a poor opinion of people, expect the worst from them and may even actively dislike them.

Maslach says we tend to see people as the cause of burnout rather than thinking in terms of what is causing burnout.

the nature of the job may precipitate burnout and not just the nature of the people performing that job."

Frederick Herzberg, in his studies and theory of motivation, stated,

Helping volunteers realize that they are not alone in feelings of emotional exhaustion, frustration or lack of achievement will reduce some of the stress they are feeling.

"The nature of the job itself is very relevant to one's motivation." Herzberg calls other factors, such as the environment or setting in which the work occurs, the type of supervision, and rules and regulations "hygiene" factors. Improving these "hygiene" factors will not contribute to a volunteer's motivation. However, if these "hygiene" factors are dissatisfying to a volunteer, he or she will appear to become demotivated. The symptoms of "burnout"—emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and a feeling of reduced person accomplishment—will begin to appear if the *situation* in which volunteers are working is dissatisfying.

It is the job of the volunteer administrator to identify the volunteer's motives and place the volunteer in a position that will fulfill both the individual's and the organization's needs. In addition, volunteer administrators need to provide the type of supervision that will create a satisfactory situation in which to work as well as provide the training that will enable their volunteers to control the situational causes of "burnout."

What To Do

To reduce volunteer turnover due to burnout, the volunteer administrator can initiate steps in three areas: (1) improvements in the job itself, (2) helping the volunteer develop per-

sonal skills to deal with burnout, and (3) social and organizational approaches.

Volunteer Job Improvement.

Each situation needs to be evaluated individually.

- Is there a desirable match of job to volunteer based on the volunteer's motives?
- Is the job one that could or should be divided into two or three jobs?
- Can the job be simplified?
- Are their meetings to be attended or reports to submit that could be eliminated?
- Are there rules and regulations (real or imagined) related to the job that could be eliminated to allow more freedom and creativity?
- Would this volunteer function better in a position where he or she had less contact with people or contact with different people?
- Are we, the administrators, guilty of constantly allowing job spillover? Just when a volunteer thinks he or she has completed a task, do we add a new one with barely a thank-you and time for the volunteer to enjoy a feeling of satisfaction?
- Do we provide the volunteer with adequate information and resources to do the job?

Developing Personal Skills to Deal with Burnout.

Some of the

skills that will help people learn to handle burnout themselves are

- Setting realistic goals
- Working smarter—not harder (organizational and time management skills)
- Doing the same thing differently
- Breaking away (it's okay to take time off)
- Taking things less personally
- Taking care of self physically and mentally
- Accentuating the positive
- Resting and relaxation
- Improving interpersonal relations skills
- Learning how to deal with different people, how to deal with conflict.

As volunteer administrators, we need to include in our volunteer orientation and training package those competencies that will help them personally deal with and control their involvement. We need to teach volunteers to pace themselves, to realize that it's okay to say no and to set realistic goals.

Social and Organizational Approaches.

The companionship of colleagues is a very positive method of helping people develop their own personal skills as well as a means of giving people an opportunity to get help, comfort and gain insight from their peers. Helping volunteers realize that they are not alone in feelings of emotional exhaustion, frustration or lack of achievement will reduce some of the stress they are feeling.

Informal get-togethers of volunteers and staff, regular phone calls or visits where volunteers are allowed to express their feelings and concerns without judgement or comment are but a couple of ways to foster colleague companionship.

So, begin by identifying the 20 percent of volunteers who are producing 80 percent of the results in your organization. Set aside at least 20 percent of your time to work closely with those volunteers. You will then be able to get to know these people and their motives, and soon will be able to recognize when signs of burnout are occurring. You will also be able to provide the type of supervision, orientation and training needed to help these volunteers succeed and control the situation in which they are working.

How to PREVENT VOLUNTEER BURNOUT

What An Expert Says

By Martha Bramhall
Interviewed by Donna Hill

Q. What is volunteer burnout?

A. Volunteer burnout is a mental, emotional and physical condition that manifests itself in a variety of symptoms. Most notably, the volunteer experiences a shift or change in perspective. The volunteer is markedly different from that person who came in with high intensity and eagerness to work. He/she came to the position with a strong commitment and now is sloughing off. Volunteers who burn out shift from idealistic enthusiasm to the cynical and negative. For example, a hot line volunteer who normally fights over who will answer the phone first may shift and start saying, "It's your turn; I took the last one."

Q. Why do volunteers burn out? What are the common causes?

A. People volunteer for complex reasons, and many of those reasons are tied to their emotions. People who volunteer are particularly connected to the mission of the organization. Also, people who volunteer don't have a lot of training in the particular field they're working in. So their attitudes, values and expectations of what they will get out of this work are very idealistic and often unrealistic.

And when you have people who are connected to the mission without a clear sense of realistic expectations, you have people who are very prone to burning out. An example would be a person whose mother

died of a rapidly moving cancer and decides six months later to volunteer for the American Cancer Society. That person is volunteering to work through grief as well as to help cancer patients. If this person doesn't understand that some of it is grief work, there's a good possibility the volunteer could burn out because he

VAL interviewed Martha Bramhall, once a burnout victim herself, on the symptoms of volunteer burnout and appropriate cures and prevention steps to take. Bramhall is a licensed clinical social worker and burnout consultant in the Washington, D.C. area.

The common causes of burnout are lack of reward, too much work, not meeting expectations, lack of training, inadequate supervision and direction, lack of funds to accomplish goals, too many difficult tasks.

or she isn't going to get what he or she expects from the volunteer work.

The common causes of burnout are lack of reward, too much work, not meeting expectations, lack of training, inadequate supervision and direction, lack of funds to accomplish goals, too many difficult tasks. Lack of reward is a big factor because the volunteer is not getting the reward of a paycheck.

Q. Who is more likely to burn out?

A. Certain personality types are more likely to burn out than others. These people are the leaders, the high achievers. They have difficulty admitting to limitations; they tend to push themselves too long and too hard, and refuse to compromise along the way. Their work most likely involves empowering and motivating others, and they tend to measure their success or failure through the success or failure of others. Ironically, this type of individual is also the one most likely to volunteer.

Q. What are the physical and emotional symptoms of burnout?

A. Volunteers who burn out feel overwhelmed. They feel tired though

they are getting plenty of rest. They anger more easily, and things that didn't used to bother them start getting on their nerves. There's usually a change in their eating or sleeping behavior. They feel an increasing sense of responsibility with an accompanying sense of feeling incapable of doing the task.

People who used to talk a lot tend to be silent. They feel exhaustion in five spheres: first, emotional, intellectual and physical. Then, they feel an interesting sense of social isolation when in fact they isolate themselves because they can't stand the thought of answering anyone else's needs. At the same time, they describe a sense of existential loneliness. Finally, they feel spiritually depleted and ask themselves, "What's the use?"

Q. How is that different from "rust out"?

A. When a volunteer starts "rusting out," he or she is getting bored. The overwhelming feeling is, "I'm really bored with this; I want you to give me something else to do; I need variety." The reactions of burned out and rusted out volunteers may appear to be similar. The volunteer who is burning out may say, "Maybe I need to do something else because I'm so overwhelmed by this." With rustout, the volunteer may also feel the need to do something else, but if you talk to him or her, you discover that the volunteer is not being challenged by the assignment.

Q. Are there any signs to warn you that a volunteer is in danger of burning out?

A. Anything you see that's a real shift in the original way the volunteer came to you is important to look for. Generally, volunteers start out with high enthusiasm for the task. If you

Certain personality types are more likely to burn out than others. These people are the leaders, the high achievers.

Anything you see that's a real shift in the original way the volunteer came to you is important to look for.

see a shift in perspective to the negative or cynical, that volunteer is in danger of burning out.

Listening is the first step toward understanding, reducing and preventing burnout. As a volunteer administrator, it's very important that you ask people how they're feeling about their work, how the work is affecting them emotionally. You should ask that all the time and develop ongoing training or group sessions to get that information.

Q. How can staff attitudes affect volunteer burnout?

A. Staff can help by being hospitable rather than hostile to volunteers. Volunteers will be looking to staff for approval. They are not volunteering to face hostility. But if staff are really hostile to volunteers, you're likely to have burnout in the organization.

If staff are hostile and you can't do anything about it, let volunteers know the situation so they don't get a lot of mixed messages, or come in with unrealistic expectations.

Q. After volunteers burn out, what's next?

A. Coming to some understanding of what is happening to them is vital to the recovery of people who have burned out. Bring out in the open what happened. Make it clear that this process is not abnormal, that it has happened to many others. Find out why burnout occurred. Ask what were the values and attitudes that

brought them to this point. What were some of the aspects of the volunteer job that led them to be disillusioned? Talk about their frustrations, their expectations. Then talk about their behavior in a nonpunitive way. Tell the volunteer that he or she is a very important and valuable person who's behaving in a negative way. Tell the volunteer you want to help

resolve whatever problems he or she is having.

Then you can negotiate. The volunteer administrator has the final say on whether or not a volunteer can go back to a job. You may grant a brief leave of absence, telling the volunteer that you value and want him or her and encouraging him or her to come back.

You may decide to monitor the volunteer's performance for a period of time. Agree that if the volunteer is still having problems, he or she can change volunteer assignments. If the volunteer's behavior is very destructive, then that volunteer may not be cut out for the work.

Again, it's very important that the volunteer understands what happened and why. That way you can turn the situation around so it won't happen again.

Q. Should particular personality types be matched with specific jobs to minimize the possibility of burnout?

A. No. What's more critical is the groundwork the volunteer administrator does in the beginning. You should first examine the potential for burnout. A good test to use as part of

Listening is the first step toward understanding, reducing and preventing burnout. As a volunteer administrator, it's very important that you ask people how they're feeling about their work, how the work is affecting them emotionally.

the volunteer's initial training is the Potential to Burnout Quiz (see box). Use this as a starting point to talk about burnout.

A lot of volunteer burnout can be combatted by talking about it from the onset. Say to volunteers, "I expect you to feel frustrated and when you get there, come back and talk to me about it," rather than letting them go through this period of frustration without having a sense that this is really not abnormal.

Certain personality types make it especially critical that the volunteer administrator sets the tone in the beginning. When volunteers first start out, you need to note those who are in the glow of idealistic enthusiasm. They are the ones you particularly want to "red flag" and keep an eye on and maybe hold the reins on a little from the beginning. The tendency of an overworked volunteer administrator is to drive these people on.

Q. What skills should the volunteer administrator develop to help prevent burned-out volunteers?

A. Volunteer administrators already have the skills they need to help minimize burnout; they just may need a little refining. To your skills of assessing whether a person would be a good volunteer, add talking to the potential volunteer clearly about expectations, getting him or her to have realistic expectations from the beginning.

To interviewing skills, add the task of interviewing/interacting with volunteers to discuss how it's going.

To initial and ongoing training, add specific training on burnout. You already have the ability to evaluate performance; add evaluating burnout potential. Add to feedback how the volunteer seems to be dealing with situations that can lead to burnout. You can assess a person's needs; add to that assessment how much help each person will need to reduce the potential for burnout.

The volunteer administrator has already faced the unpleasant task of telling a volunteer that he or she needs to change assignments or responsibilities as a last ditch effort; add to that the ability to talk through the behaviors associated with burnout and why those behaviors make it

impossible for the volunteer to continue to do the assigned job.

In other words, all the positive things you've read about being a good volunteer administrator (i.e., providing recognition, ensuring proper supervision, ensuring proper training) are helpful in dealing with burnout. If you beef up your skills, you'll keep more volunteers from burning out.

POTENTIAL TO BURNOUT QUIZ

1	2	3	4	5
Does not describe me at all		Describes me somewhat		Describes me very much

Please rate the following self-descriptive statements according to the above scale:

1. My standards of performance seem higher than most other people that I work with.
2. I consider myself to be extremely dedicated and committed to the mission of my volunteer work.
3. I seem to want more intense interactions in my life than most other people I know.
4. Others tend to see me as highly competent.
5. I tend to be more of an emotional person than an intellectual, rational person.
6. I am generally admired by my peers.
7. I consider myself to be a high energy person.
8. I have difficulty telling others about my imperfections.
9. I tend to be more self critical than self accepting.
10. I believe that if I simply try hard enough, I will reach my goals.
11. I would describe myself more as an extremist than a moderate person in that when I do something, I do it 100 percent.
12. Once I reach a goal, I rapidly lose the thrill of having achieved it and quickly set my sights on another goal.
13. I think of myself as persuasive.
14. Though others may not, I think of myself as an impatient person.
15. I have trouble delegating tasks that I enjoy but know that others could carry out just as well or almost as well as I do.

Scoring Key:

- 15-35 — low potential to burnout
- 36-55 — moderate potential to burnout
- 56-75 — high potential to burnout

'A Volunteer By Any Other Name'

What's *Your* Definition of Volunteering?

By Stephen H. McCurley

Ivan Scheier once "defined" volunteering as any activity involving all of the following characteristics:

1. The activity is relatively uncoerced.
2. The activity is intended to help.
3. The activity is done without primary or immediate thought of financial gain.
4. The activity is work, not play.

You may wish to read this definition again, and think about what it means and whether you agree with it, because we're about to give you a quiz. If you don't like Ivan's definition, make up your own and use it to take the quiz.

At this point, stop reading and take the short quiz (see box). Simply follow the directions given, either answering each question by first impression, by a careful comparison with the definition above, or after lengthy philosophical debate and pondering. There are no "right" answers, so be as honest as you can, using whatever system or definition you feel most comfortable with. Please note that reading any further without taking the quiz constitutes "cheating."

Now that you've taken the quiz, we're going to discuss the quiz

*Steve McCurley is VOLUNTEER's
director of constituent relations.*

items by grouping them within four categories. As we discuss each category, you might find it interesting to compare the answers or ratings that you gave to each of the questions within that category, since each question simply represents a slightly different factual example of the same philosophical issue.

The Paid Volunteer

Questions 2, 4, 7 and 11 represent examples of "volunteers" who are actually paid for their volunteer work. In each instance, some financial gain influences volunteer participation—either by making it possible (as in Question #4) or by encouraging if not provoking it (Question #2). Another example not included in the quiz would be the employee who is granted an hour off the job to volunteer (while retaining full pay) in return for each hour the employee donates, a possible example of the "partial volunteer."

These are all interesting examples of the "third party payment" system that we are developing in the volunteer field. In each instance, the agency accepts individuals who are "volunteers" only in the sense that the *agency* doesn't pay for the person, *not* in the sense that the individual is not ultimately paid. An even more extreme case is the stipended volunteer (a Foster Grandparent, for example) who is, in fact, directly paid by the utilizing agency.

The Coerced Volunteer

Questions 1, 5, 8 and 9 represent examples of "volunteers" who are motivated to "donate" time by a source other than their own independent initiative. In each case, the motivation to volunteer is initiated and directed by an outside force, and in each case, it is likely that without that outside force the volunteering would not occur.

Of these examples, Question #1 may prove to be the most significant. The alternative sentencing volunteer "force" represents an enormously growing segment of the volunteer community. But are they volunteers? This may turn out to be a serious question, if only from the legal standpoint. For example, does an agency's insurance policy that covers "volunteers" automatically cover those people who are referred

through an alternative sentencing program? Fearing the worst-case answer to that question, the Consortium for Human Services has just developed a specialized insurance plan to specifically cover Alternative Sentencing. (Don't call me, call them: P.O. Box 1183, San Jose, CA 95108.)

The "Selfish" Volunteer

Questions 3, 5, 10 and 13 present examples of the "volunteer" who is donating time for a reason other than to help others. Although we have always recognized that self-interest probably plays some part in the generic motivation to volunteer, the cases represented in the quiz extend that non-altruistic motivation to more of an extreme than we usually see.

Questions 6 and 13, in fact, represent one aspect of volunteer motivation that organizations are increasingly capitalizing on in their volunteer recruitment efforts—stressing the "What's in it for me?" theme. A common, less extreme, example is the use of employment and training portfolios for volunteers.

Question #3 is intriguing as an example of another potential legal difficulty. The Internal Revenue Service allows deductions for charitable donations only if the donations are not primarily intended for the benefit of the individual making the donation or for that individual's family. It has refused charitable deductions (for driving expenses) in situations very similar to our example, on the theory that it is not really a "charitable donation." If you wouldn't call it a charitable donation of money because it actually is for the benefit of the individual, can you call it a charitable donation of time?

Question #10 is a good example of the "self-help" group phenomenon, and is interesting to consider in reverse. At what point does "self-help" start? Consider the following instances:

- Volunteering to help the world.
- Volunteering to help your country.
- Volunteering to help your city.
- Volunteering to help your neighborhood.
- Volunteering to safeguard your own home.

Or consider the following instances:

- Volunteering to help people in general.
- Volunteering to help people with a specific problem.
- Volunteering to help members of your peer group.
- Volunteering to help a member of your family.
- Volunteering to help yourself.

Where on the scale does "volunteering to help others" become "volunteering to help oneself?"

The "Unintentional" Volunteer

Question #12 poses the issue of the "unconscious" volunteer. Should one receive credit for doing good without knowing it and without intending it? If you categorized the infant in Question #12 as a volunteer, you might want to consider whether you would classify a shade tree in the same way: It is uncoerced, not financially rewarded, and has as much intent as the infant. (I'm a little bit lacking in whether growing leaves is work or play, and, in fact, would be interested in anyone who would like to come up with any intriguing examples of the difference between those two categories.)

Carrying the Debate Further

In many ways, this discussion represents pure abstract philosophical debate, vaguely reminiscent of the medieval debates over the numbers of angels who could fit on the head of a pin. In other ways, such as the legal issues mentioned above, or in the debates in various legislatures about giving a tax credit for volunteer time, the definitional and philosophical questions could have a real world impact.

If you're interested in pursuing this further, let me suggest two possibilities:

First, get a copy of Ivan Scheier's book, *Exploring Volunteer Space* (available from Volunteer Readership). It contains a delightful and thought-provoking examination of the areas above and adds even more confusion to the "Who Is a Volunteer?" question.

Second, send us a copy of your answers to the quiz. If we get enough responses, we'll report them in an upcoming issue and you can see how you compare to others. And be sure to include any further pseudo-volunteer examples you can think of.

WHO'S A VOLUNTEER?

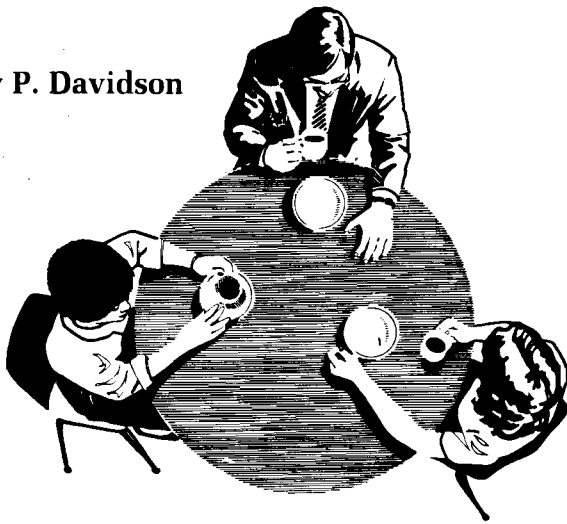
Instruction: Read the descriptions below and then rate each example on the scale to the right as "Definitely a Volunteer" to "Not a Volunteer."

	Definitely a Volunteer			Not a Volunteer	
	1	2	3	4	5
1. An accountant charged with embezzling who accepts a sentence of 250 hours of community service work in lieu of prosecution.	1	2	3	4	5
2. A teenager enrolled in the City Volunteer Corps, a national youth service program in New York City, who receives an \$80 per week stipend.	1	2	3	4	5
3. A mother who becomes leader of a Girl Scout troop because of her daughter's desire to be a Scout. No one else will lead the troop, so the mother agrees to take over, but only as long as her daughter is involved.	1	2	3	4	5
4. An IBM executive who is granted a year of social service leave with pay to become a temporary staff person with a nonprofit organization.	1	2	3	4	5
5. A child who assists in setting up booths at a volunteer fair because one of her parents is a volunteer administrator and "asks" her to help.	1	2	3	4	5
6. A teenager who offers to program the computer at a nonprofit agency in order to establish an "employment" history. After three months, he intends to quit and apply for a job at McDonalds.	1	2	3	4	5
7. The CEO of a local corporation who is volunteer chairperson of the United Way campaign and who delegates all the work to his assistant.	1	2	3	4	5
8. The assistant to the CEO in Question #7.	1	2	3	4	5
9. The student who is doing a community service assignment as part of a high school graduation requirement.	1	2	3	4	5
10. The homeowner who helps create a crime watch group to safeguard his own neighborhood.	1	2	3	4	5
11. The paid staff person who serves on the board of a nonprofit group in a slot that is reserved for her agency.	1	2	3	4	5
12. The six-month-old baby who accompanies her parents to visit seniors at a nursing home.	1	2	3	4	5
13. The trainer who does a free workshop at a conference as a marketing device.	1	2	3	4	5

Communications Workshop

Learning to Listen

By Jeffrey P. Davidson



Few people have thought about learning how to become a good listener. Yet how many of us get distracted when someone is talking, jump ahead in our minds to what we want to say next, and then later blame the speaker for not getting the message across?

According to researchers at the University of Minnesota, on the average, people spend 45 percent—nearly half of their communication time—listening. Good listening is an active, complex process. It takes

Jeffrey P. Davidson is a member of the National Capital Speakers Association and the author of more than 250 articles on management, marketing, writing and speaking topics.

knowledge of a few basic tenets and then lots of practice. In either a personal or a professional relationship, it pays to sharpen listening skills.

Dr. Mortimer Adler of the Aspen Institute, in his recent bestseller, *How to speak and How to Listen*, says active listening involves work. Though listening occupies more of our time than speaking or reading, Adler says, we seldom receive any training in this area.

Distractors

Dr. Chester L. Karrass, director of the Santa Monica, California-based Center for Effective Negotiating, offers several reasons why we don't listen as well as we should:

- We often have a lot on our minds. It's not easy to switch gears quickly to absorb fully and participate in

what is being said to us.

- We have adopted the habit of talking and interrupting too much, and do not let the other party continue even when it may be to our benefit.
- We are anxious to rebut what the other person has said. We're afraid that if we do not do so right away, we may forget to make that point.
- We allow ourselves to be easily distracted because of the environment in which the meeting takes place. (Have you ever asked your secretary to hold all phone calls during meetings?)
- We jump to conclusions before all the evidence has been presented or is available.
- We discount or "write off" some statements too quickly because we don't place importance on the party who is presenting them.
- We tend to discard information that doesn't match what we want to hear or that we don't like.

Dr. Karrass points out that "poor listeners often drop out of a conversation in the hopes that they will catch up later. This seldom happens." If you find your mind wandering away while listening, make a conscious (and repeated, if need be) effort to focus on the conversation.

You're Not Alone

If, by now, you've confessed to yourself that you're not a good listener, lighten up—you do not have a monopoly on underdeveloped listening skills. Virtually all human beings must work to improve their listening skills.

We are able to think and process thoughts four to five times faster than the normal speaking rate, so it is easy to let our minds race ahead of the speaker, not focus on what is being said or appear uninterested. The faster your ability to process information, the greater your potential for poor listening when an oral presentation is being made to you. Good listeners, however, use this lag time to make mental summaries of information presented and notes of ideas to pursue later, without losing focus on the conversation.

Stuart L. Tubbs, of the General Motors Institute, believes that visual cues are highly influential in interpersonal communication. Facial expression and eye contact are two

of the most important visual cues. For example, if you avoid eye contact while listening, this could seem to express disapproval or disinterest. Even if you look directly at someone, your facial expression may still indicate a negative reaction. Tubbs points out that "probably the most rewarding combination is a smiling face and a head nod in combination with direct eye contact. From these and other cues we infer support, confirmation and agreement."

Another good way to enhance one's listening capability is to pick a location and a time (when possible) that are free from noise and interference.

Evaluate Skills

Here is a checklist developed by Dr. Richard C. Cupka of Purdue University to help you evaluate your own listening habits:

- Do you give the other party a chance to talk?
- Do you interrupt while someone

is making a point?

- Do you look at the speaker while he or she is speaking?
- Do you impart the feeling that your time is being wasted?
- Are you constantly fidgeting with a pencil or paper?
- Do you smile at the person talking to you?
- Do you ever get the speaker off the track or off the subject?
- Are you open to new suggestions, or do you stifle them immediately?
- Do you anticipate what the other person will say next? Do you jump ahead, anticipating what his or her next point will be?
- Do you put the other person on the defensive when you are asked a question?
- Do you ask questions that indicate that you have not been listening?
- Do you try to out-stare the speaker?
- Do you overdo your show of attention by nodding too much or saying yes to everything?
- Do you insert humorous remarks when the other person is being serious?
- Do you frequently sneak looks at your watch or the clock while listening?

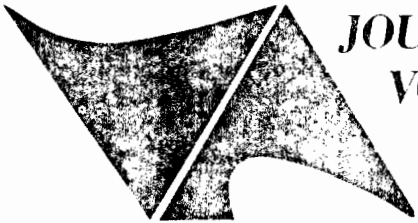
This is a tough checklist. Anyone who is honest will probably discover several areas for improvement.

Becoming an active and effective listener provides two important benefits:

- You may gain information from new sources that you previously would have missed through poor listening.
- Even if you don't ultimately agree with the other person, at least he or she will feel that you are fair and open-minded.

Developing good listening habits is one way to become a better communicator. Active listening improves your interpersonal skills and human relations capabilities. Good listening can enhance your personal and professional life. The sooner you start listening effectively, the better!

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JOURNAL OF VOLUNTARY ACTION RESEARCH

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Published quarterly.
Editor: Jon Van Til, Rutgers University, Camden College of Arts and Sciences

Subscription rates: \$40/yr. \$80/2 yr., \$120/3 yr. Surface mail outside U.S.A. add \$12/yr.; Single copies \$12. ISSN 0094-0607

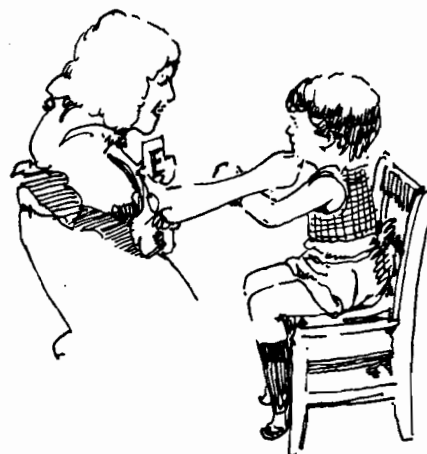
Please address inquiries and orders to:
JOURNAL OF VOLUNTARY ACTION RESEARCH
Transaction Periodicals Consortium
Department 2000
Rutgers-The State University
New Brunswick, New Jersey 08903



Exclusive distributors in Europe and the British Isles:
Karger Libri AG, Petersgraben 31, P.O. CH-4009, Basel, Switzerland

Volunteer Recognition

A Year-Round Responsibility



The following list provides lots of ideas at a glance for recognizing your volunteers year-round as well as during National Volunteer Week. It is reprinted with permission from a recently revised handbook entitled, *From Here to There*, published by the Voluntary Action Center of the United Way in Dayton, Ohio.

A volunteer's pay is recognition and assurance that he/she is an equal partner of the agency or organization. Recognition, therefore, should be an integral part of the management process so that people feel valued and good about themselves and their organization.

WHEN TO RECOGNIZE VOLUNTEERS

1. At the time they sign up to volunteer:

- Send letter of welcome.
- Issue I.D. card, name tags, uniform, etc.
- Provide an orientation program.
- Provide a parking space, lunch, coffee and/or mileage reimbursement.
- Provide good job descriptions, training and supervision.
- Provide RSVP benefits, if eligible.
- Publish name of new volunteer in employee newsletter and/or volunteer newsletter.

2. Daily or weekly:

- SMILE!
- Informal thank-yous by staff and volunteer coordinator.
- Document their time for evaluation.
- On the job praise.

3. Monthly:

- Volunteer of the Month.
- Appropriate evaluations.
- Articles in newsletters.



4. Annually:

- Special events where awards are given, such as a dinner, luncheon, reception, coffee or dinner dance.
- Certificates, plaques and other awards for time spent volunteering.
- Gift of photo of volunteer at work or receiving award.
- Volunteer Appreciation Day—use facilities free of charge.

- "Turn-about" lunch—staff serve volunteers.
- Holiday parties.
- Teenage pizza party.

5. At the completion of a special project:

- Say "Thank you."
- Send letter of thanks to volunteers and/or their boss or school or staff supervisor.
- Write article for newspaper or in-house publications about project.
- Take out to lunch or for a coffee break.
- Promote to another job; give more responsibility.

6. At meetings with staff or groups:

- Tell about volunteer projects and individual volunteer accomplishments.
- Praise volunteers to others.
- Have a slide show or film showing volunteers at work.
- Invite volunteers to staff meetings.
- Provide volunteers with outside training programs.

7. On their birthdays or holidays:

- Send cards.
- Have an informal party.

8. When they are sick:

- Send a get-well card.
- Call at home.

9. At the time they leave:

- Send a letter of thanks.
- Give a certificate or resolution of appreciation.

- Send letter of recommendation to potential employer.

10. During National Volunteer Week:

- Be a part of the community recognition activities planned by local Volunteer Center.

WHERE TO RECOGNIZE VOLUNTEERS

1. Volunteer office or lounge:

- Have coffee available.
- Have pictures posted.

2. Hallway entrance to building or cafeteria:

- Have a bulletin board with pictures.
- Display posters.

3. On the job:

- Thank-yous and smiles.
- Treat as an employee.
- Invite to staff meetings.

4. At home:

- Send a letter.
- Call.

5. At school or business:

- Send a letter.

6. At church:

- Announcements in bulletin.
- Encourage minister to talk about volunteering.

7. At shopping centers:

- Display banner or billboard.

8. At main intersection:

- Display banner or billboard.

9. In all media:

- Newspaper—feature articles about volunteer projects and/or individual volunteers.
- TV—commercial and cable.
- Radio—news and public service announcements.
- Slide shows or movies.
- In-house publications.
- Volunteer newsletters.
- Professional journals or magazines.
- TV documentary during National Volunteer Week.

10. City Council or Commission meetings:

- Proclamation.
- Mayor's Award for Volunteer Service.

RECOGNITION OF STAFF WHO WORK WITH VOLUNTEERS

1. Thank staff members who are working cooperatively with volunteers:
 - For special projects they worked on together.
 - For using volunteers' skills creatively.

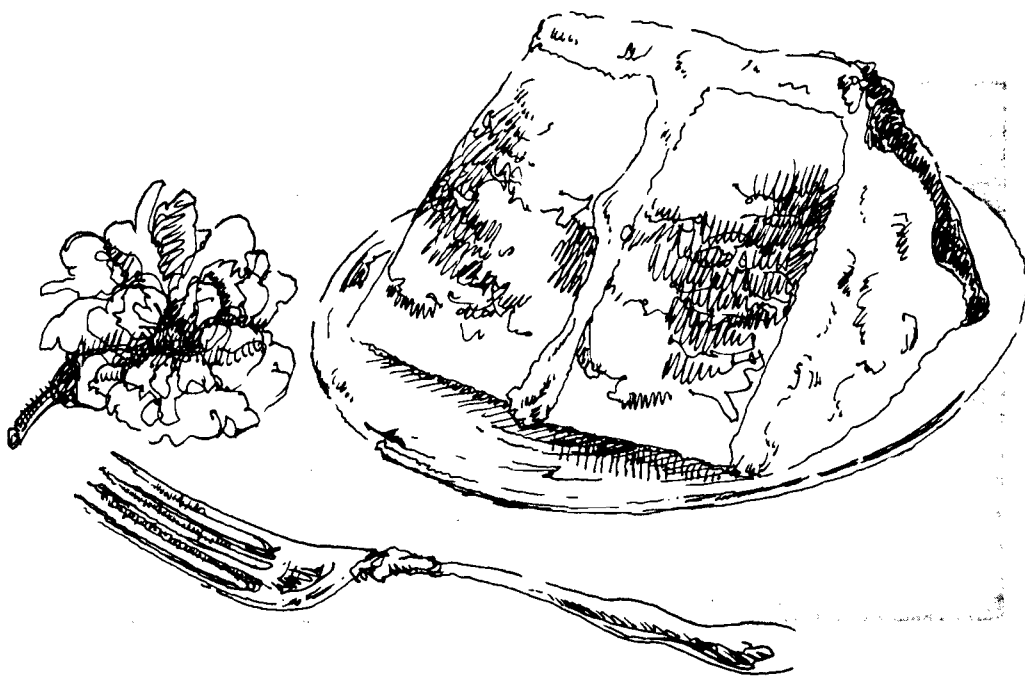
- For using lots of volunteers.
- For taking time to supervise and train volunteers.
- For showing their appreciation to volunteers.

2. Send memo to department and supervisor recognizing their effort.
3. Award certificate to department who most effectively uses skills and talents of volunteers.
4. Invite staff to volunteer recognition events.
5. Remember, with today's budget cuts, some staff may feel "forced" to use volunteer assistance and feel negative toward them. Others may feel threatened for their jobs. Help staff to see the benefits of volunteer



assistance. Staff may not have even thought of using volunteers and something new is always frightening. Use this "crisis" as an opportunity to explore new ways of doing things. Many of the most loyal supporters of volunteer programs were very skeptical of the idea at first.

From Here to There—Management Techniques for Volunteer Programs, the manual from which this article was excerpted, comes in a 3-ring notebook and is divided into sections on key aspects of volunteer management—each presented in the same easy-to-read, bulleted format. It can be obtained for \$8.50 + \$1.50 postage/handling (prepaid) from: Voluntary Action Center of the United Way of Dayton Area, 184 Salem Ave, Dayton, OH 45406. (Descriptive brochure available, too.)



EVALUATION

- 1. PURPOSE
- 2. PRACTICAL
- 3. PREPARED
- 4. PRESENTATION (a) Interesting
(b) Understandable
(c) Involved

EVALUATION CHART

	Very Little		Moderately		A Great Deal
I have learned	1	2	3	4	5
I have been involved	1	2	3	4	5
It was fun	1	2	3	4	5
It was interesting	1	2	3	4	5
It was understandable	1	2	3	4	5
It was prepared	1	2	3	4	5
It was useful	1	2	3	4	5

MEAN 21

Total

SESSION _____ COURSE _____

Content

Did content meet expectations? Why?

Was material interesting? How?

What was gained from session?

Comments:

Presentation

Was material well presented? How?

Were presentation techniques suitable? How?

Was audience encouraged to participate? How?

Comments:

Session leader

Was delivery interesting?

Was speaker audible?

Was speaker relaxed?

Comments:

Recommendations:

END-OF-SESSION REACTION

- | | (a) | (b) | (c) | (d) |
|---|-------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Were you interested in this session? | Very much () | Quite a bit () | Some, but not much () | Very little () |
| 2. Did you feel that most of the group was interested in the session? | Very much () | Quite a bit () | Some, but not much () | Very little () |
| 3. Did you learn any new facts or get any new ideas? | Certainly did () | Probably did () | Maybe () | Not at all () |
| 4. Was there enough opportunity for participation? | Too much () | All that was needed () | Should have been more () | Should have been much more () |
| 5. What did you like best about the session? | | | | |
| 6. What suggestions do you have for improving future sessions? | | | | |