

**WEBELO LEADERS AND COMMISSIONERS:
WORKING TOGETHER TO INSURE A SUCCESSFUL
WEBELO TO SCOUT TRANSITION**

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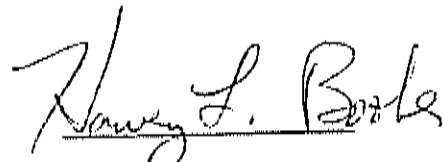
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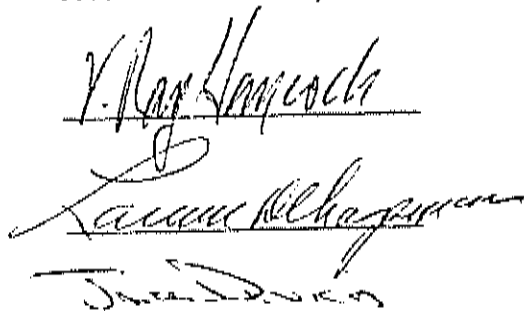
To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Rebecca L. Ingram, entitled "Webeho Leaders and Commissioners: Working Together To Insure A Successful Webeho To Scout Transition". I have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Commissioner Science.

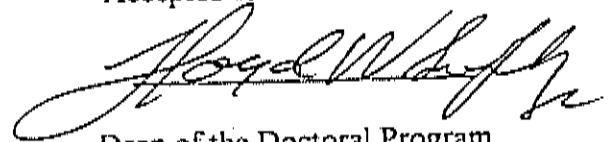


Tom Ladd, Advisor

We have read this thesis and
recommend its acceptance:



Accepted for the Council:



Dean of the Doctoral Program

PREFACE

Commissioners have first-hand knowledge, through visiting many packs and troops, of well-run, excellent quality Scouting units in their areas. So many volunteers work extremely hard, devoting hours of their time to the Scouts in their volunteer job. All dedicated adults working in the Scouting program want to see a young man continue through Cub Scouts on into Boy Scouts to attain the Eagle rank. But so many times, because of many different reasons, a boy will drop out of the program.

The goal of this thesis is to give volunteer leaders--specifically Webelo leaders and Commissioners--tools to help them strengthen the Webelo program as a boy approaches Boy Scout age. By doing this, the Scout will have a better chance of moving into a Boy Scout troop to continue in a program he enjoyed so much as a Cub Scout. The Commissioner will be given ideas of how to improve communication between Webelo leaders and Scoutmasters, counseling techniques, and information to assist leaders in planning the transition process.

All leaders want a quality program for every level that young men experience in Scouting. The purpose of this thesis is to give leaders involved with the transition process help to strengthen that area, in order for more boys to graduate into Boy Scouting.

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I. Introduction

As Scout leaders, we constantly see the importance of boys' involvement in this most valuable program. The benefits are obvious to us--as obvious to us as the rewards are to the boys--the merit badges proudly displayed on the sashes, and the rank advancements on the Cub Scout shirts.

Throughout the Scouts' progression in the program, the Cub years pass relatively easily. However, when the time comes to make the natural move from a pack to a troop, oftentimes boys will drop out of the program. This is due to many contributing factors--lack of interest, no exposure to an outdoor program as a Webelo, lack of knowledge of what Boy Scouting is about, or unfamiliarity of the available troops in the area.

To facilitate the Webelo to Scout transition, this thesis offers Webelo leaders and Commissioners ideas: for Webelo leaders, an emphasis on the importance of the transition process and their responsibilities in it. A section on advancement emphasis will be given to help raise the awareness of how important this phase is in Scout retention. Also, the impact of the outdoor program will be discussed.

To aid Commissioners in working with Webelo leaders, discussion ideas on the transition process will be given; also, how the commissioner can help Webelo leaders network with Scoutmasters to provide an information flow between the two.

An important aspect of transition is the planning of the calendar. Oftentimes Webelo leaders need help looking ahead to the goal of moving Webelos to a Scout troop. Commissioners can assist those individuals in goal setting, calendar planning, and the actual transition process.

As commissioners, we have the unique opportunity to identify weak areas in the Scouting program in our own districts and councils. It is intended for this thesis to

the boys to receive their Arrow of Light awards. Not to disparage that goal, as it is certainly a noteworthy one, but it **should** be the Webelo leader's plan to *prepare* the Webelos for Boy Scouts and to *graduate* them into a Boy Scout troop.¹ As a natural consequence of this preparation, most boys will earn the Arrow of Light award. Therefore, the Webelo leader can be assured of this occurring, and can then concentrate on the task of transitioning the boys to Boy Scouts through a program which will be fun for them.

As previously stated, the Webelo leader's ultimate goal should be to prepare for and graduate to Boy Scouts all of the boys in the den/patrol. In the process of working toward these goals, the scouts will receive these awards, since they represent the skills that must be learned. The creation of the Webelos **rank** in 1967 was for the sole purpose of preparing boys for a troop. In 1960, Cub Scouting lost 30% of the registered boys during the year. A survey was conducted through the University of Michigan to find out why. The report was presented in 1964, which led to the creation of the Webelos rank in 1967. This was for the specific purpose of giving the older boys a unique set of achievements and experiences to better prepare them for Boy Scouting. It was also designed to help retain interest as they moved from Cub Scouting into Boy Scouting, since many of the boys are lost during this period. (With the creation of the Webelos rank came the elimination of the Lion rank).²

Informing the Webelo Scout about the history of his rank, advancement pins and badges is an effective tool for emphasizing how every level of Scouting will build upon the next. The Unit Commissioners can facilitate this "historical lesson" by presenting it to Webelo leaders and/or Cub leaders in the district's Roundtable. Emphasis should be

¹ Wise, Kathy and Lec, Don; Assistant District Chairmen/Toqua/GSMC
² www\BSA History and Traditions; Insignia and Ranks

placed on giving the information to the boys, in the form a story, which can be used to talk about Boy Scouting, and their preparation for it as Webelos.

A brief history of the Webelo "colors" states that with the creation of the "new" Webelo program in 1967, came the introduction of the activity pins--but where to put them posed a problem. The answer came from Baden-Powell's very first campout on Brownsea Island in England. Each boy was presented with a shoulder knot and a long streamer of colored tape. The colors on the tape represented which patrol the boy was in. The modern day "colors" were comprised of woven red, gold and green streamers on a metal bar. It is thought that the colors represented the various levels of Scouting--gold for Cub Scouts, green for Boy Scouts, and red for Explorers. The "assigned" colors changed in 1980 with the Boy Scout and Explorer colors reversing as new uniforms were introduced. ([www\BSA History and Traditions](http://www.BSA History and Traditions))

An excellent source of information for Webelo leaders is the Webelos To Scout Transition guide. In this guide, the purpose of transition is "to give every Webelo a sampling of the troop program, troop leadership advancement opportunities, and the fun and excitement of Scouting."³ This proven transition plan results in "better prepared, more enthusiastic new members, a feeling of success for the pack, the assurance to each boy that he is wanted, and an outstanding Scouting experience for the boys."

Requirements for leader recognition awards offer an excellent source of information as to the guidelines for den/patrol adult leadership. The Progress Record For The Webelos Den Leader Award states: "during at least one program year, have a minimum of 50 percent of the Webelos Scouts in your den advance in rank (Webelos Badge or Arrow of Light Award)". Also, "graduate a minimum of 60 percent of the eligible members of your Webelos den into Boy Scouting."⁴

³ Webelos To Scout Transition: BSA

⁴ Progress Record for the Webelos Den Leader award: BSA

Key leaders who might be sources of information are the Scoutmasters and Assistant Scoutmasters of local troops, and of course, the Unit Commissioner of the packs and troops. Through attending Roundtables and trainings, the Webelo leader should become familiar with these individuals who would be happy to assist with giving demonstrations at den meetings, to help with the Webelo advancement program, and to invite the Webelos to visit their troops. It is vital that the Webelo leader meet with the Scoutmaster of nearby troops to plan the transition process.

It is a big responsibility for a leader to begin the Webelo phase of Cub Scouting with a group of fourth graders. Fortunately, scouters are always taught that resources are valuable tools. It is, however, the leaders' responsibility to utilize the resources available to them. The most obvious resource, and the one that every adult leader is encouraged to use, is that of training. A new Webelo leader, just like a new Tiger Cub or Wolf leader, needs to have the specific training available for that role. There are several levels of training available to Webelo leaders--the first being Basic Leader Training (BLT), and the Webelo section of it. The new Webelo leader must have this section of BLT to be considered "trained"; in addition, they must have Webelo Outdoor Leader Training. The monthly training meetings, know as *Roundtable* offer valuable information for all levels of Cub and Boy Scout leaders. Finally, a fourth training that is extremely helpful for the Webelo leader to have is Scoutmastership Fundamentals. This training program is not just for Scoutmasters, but for all adults who plan to have responsibilities in a troop. It is especially helpful for the Webelo leader, since the syllabus is designed to put the adult in the role of a boy who is in a patrol within a troop. The adults learn the "patrol method", learn the organization of the troop, each adult leader's role, as well as the boys' roles in the different leadership positions. Therefore, a Webelo leader can use this information to teach the fifth graders more about Boy Scouting. And most valuable, is the outdoor training received, which is so important to a Webelo leader who is preparing fourth and fifth grade boys for Boy Scouts.

Commissioners have the opportunity to meet the Webelo leaders in these training environments, as the commissioner many times may be on the training staff. They then, have the chance to directly help the leader with any problems they might have, or answer any questions regarding the transition process. Exposure to Scoutmasters is another benefit for the Webelo leader, as they involve themselves in events that are open to Cub as well as Boy Scout leaders.

It is also the responsibility of the Webelo leader to plan the year with the Cubmaster. It must be decided when to move the boys to a troop (this will be discussed in further detail in the next section, "Timetable"). The Cubmaster should be directly involved with this Webelo den/patrol to obtain for them a Den Chief, through communication with a Scoutmaster. The Webelo den chief serves as a program assistant to the Webelo den leader. This is a direct method for preparing boys for a troop. By example, the den chief may be the single most important person who will be influencing Webelos. (**Webelo To Scout Transition**) Since the den chief is comparable to a patrol leader, the Webelos see this individual in a leadership position.⁵

To give them more exposure to Boy Scouts, the Webelos may enjoy calling their former den a "patrol", and giving it an official boy scout patrol name. If they choose to do this, they must begin wearing the khaki boy scout shirts, with their patrol emblem on their right sleeve, under the American flag. They should make a patrol flag and elect a patrol leader. Becoming a distinct patrol, the Webelos will become more visible in the pack meetings, and therefore, will be looked up to by the younger Cub Scouts. It is part of the Webelo Scout's training to take a more active part in the pack meetings, in order to demonstrate new leadership skills. Showing proper flag ceremonies and conducting demonstrations are excellent ways to promote the anticipation of moving into a troop.

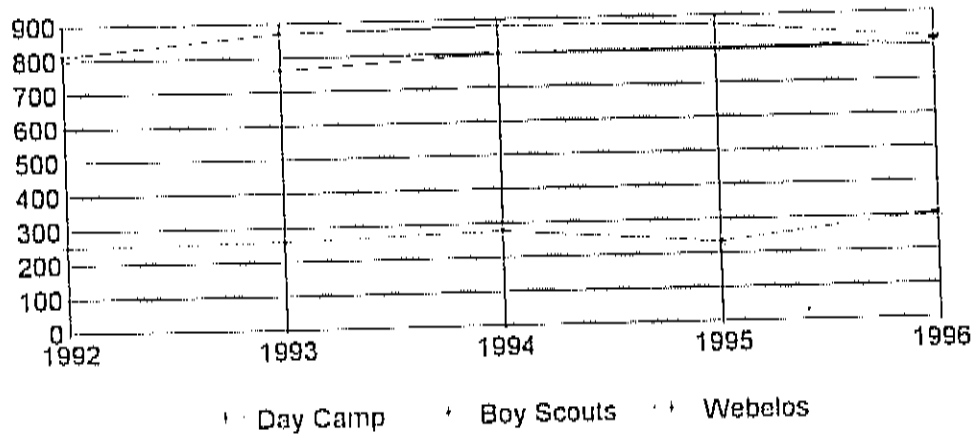
⁵ Commissioner Fieldbook for Unit Service; BSA, p. 7

In order to adequately prepare Webelos for Scouts, the leader must introduce an outdoor program. Although the Scouts may have enjoyed backyard family camping as a Cub Scout, the Webelo patrol should begin to learn how to actually plan the campout. If the Webelo leader is uncertain, or inexperienced in this area, they can always receive help in planning the outing from a Scoutmaster and his troop. **(Webelo To Scout Transition)** The Webelo leaders can use their unit commissioners to help them network with a Scoutmaster in their area. Webelos are encouraged to go on overnight experiences and to have occasional joint activities with a Boy Scout troop.⁶ The experience of "assisting in planning and conducting a Webelo den / Boy Scout troop joint activity" is a Webelo leader's responsibility, and is also one of the requirements for the Webelo Den Leader's knot. **(Progress Record)**

As a district/council liaison, the Pack's Unit Commissioner can help keep the Webelo leader informed of upcoming district and council outdoor events. These planned activities support the Transition Plan by offering a clear path to scouting by introducing the Webelos to the camping experience. Examples of district and council events are: camporees, Webelo resident camps (held in the summer), and Webelos Woods (council-wide only). Webelos Woods is an outdoor program activity to introduce graduating Webelos and their parents to Boy Scout fun and excitement. It is held in the early spring at the council camp. **(The Transition Plan)**

⁶ [www\BSA website](http://www.BSA.org); What Is Cub Scouting?

Long-term Camping Effects on Enrollment



All Scouters have been told through their training that "long-term" camping attendance increases a boy's chances of staying in Scouts. The graph above demonstrates that fact. It is based on statistics received from the Toqua District Executive, Andrew Graves from the years 1992 - 1996. Included in the graph are:

- 1) total numbers of Boy Scouts in the Toqua district
- 2) total numbers of Webelo Scouts in the Toqua district
- 3) total numbers of day camp attendees in the Toqua district

From the graph shown, attendance in an outdoor program (day camp) directly affects retention. In 1993 and 1994, day camp attendance rose. Reflecting that, the total numbers of Webelos in the district rose in 1994. As a cascading effect, in 1995 and 1996, the total numbers of Boy Scouts rose (reflecting the increase in Webelos in 1994). Between 1993 and 1994, all these numbers increased--day camp attendance, Webelo enrollment, and therefore, Boy Scout enrollment. In 1995, the day camp attendance dropped, therefore, in 1996, we saw a decline in the total numbers of Webelos registered.

The conclusion that can be drawn from this, is that even at the Cub Scout level, long-term camping attendance reflects directly on youth retention in the program.

The Greater Pittsburgh Council, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, offers Webelos a camping experience in between Cub Scout day camp and Boy Scout summer camp. It is similar to summer camp, in that it is six days and five nights. The "Webelos Camp" offers activities such as water sports, nature, Scout camp visits, hiking, and activity pin advancement opportunities.⁷ The Great Smoky Mountain Council offers a Webelo resident camp, which is similar to the previous program, except that it is only three to four days. These programs are excellent ways to introduce a boy to long-term camping. According to Great Smoky Mountain Council statistics, *most* boys who attend Resident Camp graduate and become active in Boy Scouting. (Wisc/Lee)

When "joint activities" are encouraged, they do not solely mean campouts. The Scoutmaster and Webelo leader should discuss activities that both are planning, in order to include each group in the other's program, if possible. For example, the troop can invite the Webelos to a Court of Honor, on a day hike, to a campfire program, or they can plan a joint Good Turn project for the community or for the chartering organization. In turn, the Webelos can invite a few troop members to their den meeting for demonstrations.

To complete the year, the Webelo leader should be planning with the Cubmaster an impressive graduation ceremony for the Webelos. An invitation should be extended to the Scoutmaster(s) of the troop(s) accepting the Webelos; and the pack or troop(s) should consider the presentation of neckerchiefs, loops, and /or Boy Scout Handbooks as graduation gifts. Follow-up on the part of the Webelo leader is an important completion of the transition--this individual needs to encourage the involvement of the new Boy Scouts' parents in the troop. Also, the leader needs to pursue any boys who did not complete the transition, in order to encourage them to stay in the program.

7 [www\Listing of Greater Pittsburgh Council](http://www.gpc.org)

III. The Timetable

The well-prepared Webelo leader should be planning ahead, even as early as the fall of the fourth grade year, in order to insure as successful a transition as possible.

Preparation is extremely important. Therefore, it is essential for the fourth grade Webelo leader to set long-range goals for the Scouts. The Webelo To Scout Transition guide is an excellent source of information for the leader to use to plan the fourth and fifth grade programs.

Several factors should be taken into consideration by the leader when setting long-term goals; does he/she have an idea of which troop(s) the boys will move into? If so, when do the Scoutmasters of these troops like to receive new Scouts?

In considering when the "cross-over" will take place, and also in order to plan joint activities, the Webelo leader needs to know who the Scoutmasters and troops are in their area. The district Roundtables are excellent opportunities for this information and interaction. Special Roundtable events designed to match up dens with troops in a partnership might be planned by the Roundtable Commissioners who realize the importance of the Webelo to Scout transition. October is a good month to do this.

The requirements for a boy to join Boy Scouts are as follows:

1. Completion of the fifth grade OR
2. Be eleven years old OR
3. Have earned the Arrow of Light award

Since the birthdates of Scouts in the fifth grade Webelo patrol vary so much during the year, planning on all boys advancing at age eleven is unreasonable. If the leader decides to wait until all have completed the fifth grade, then they will not have had much experience as Boy Scouts before going to summer camp. Therefore, the most logical guideline to use is the attainment of the Arrow of Light award, which if obtained by each boy, will give the patrol the added advantage of going to a troop as soon as possible in the fifth grade year.

The traditional schedule of Webelos' advancements is: the attainment of the Webelos badge in January of the fourth grade year, and the Arrow of Light in February of the fifth grade year. (**Webelo To Scout Transition**) However, a dynamic den leader may have more ambitious goals. There are some Scoutmasters who prefer to have new Scouts join in October or November of the second Webelo year for various reasons. In some cases, they want the Scouts to have achieved the ranks of Scout and Tenderfoot, at least, before going to summer camp. The thought behind that is that the boys can go directly into the merit badge program at camp, instead of going into the Dan Beard program--a basic Scout skills program designed for brand new Scouts. For the new Scout, Dan Beard is a great program. However, if a boy has been in scouts for a few months, he might find repetition in the Dan Beard program from his troop meetings. Since this is such a crucial time of retention in Scouting, it is most important to keep a boy's interest. The move from Cubs to Boy Scouts can be threatening or intimidating, causing boys to drop out of the program. Going directly to summer camp for a boy with little experience may have a negative effect. Therefore, moving the boys to a troop at least halfway into the fifth grade year so they can become accustomed to the troop, new friends, and can begin to learn how to function as a patrol, has a lot of advantages. Keeping boys in Scouts is the most important one.

If the Webelo den leader plans to transition their scouts after the advancement to the Arrow of Light, then planning must occur as soon as possible--preferably, the summer *before* the beginning of the fourth grade year. (Not too many Webelos leaders are thinking that far ahead--therefore, the Unit Commissioner needs to be one step ahead of the game. That will be discussed later on). The Webelo To Scout Transition guide offers a schedule of months to plan various activity pins. The den leader may certainly follow this guide, or may evaluate the Webelo badges and Arrow of Light requirements and put their own plan into place. Since the requirements for Arrow of Light state the participation in troop activities and meeting visits, these may be reserved for the fall of the

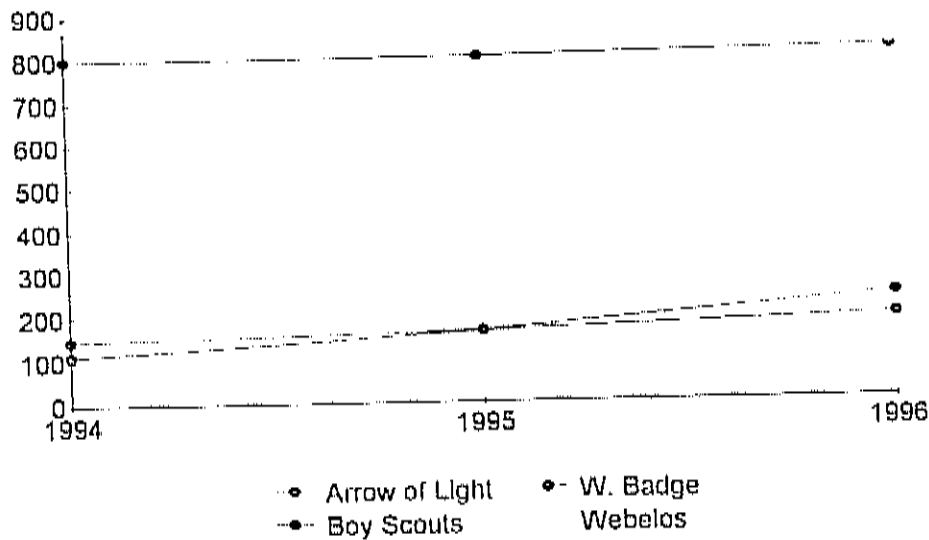
fifth grade year. Many troops invite fifth grade Webelos to accompany them to the Fall Camporee. Involving the Webelos in a week-end troop activity, that close to their graduation ceremony, will give them time to learn about troop organization and will give them time to mature (qualities that a Scoutmaster would like to see in a group of fifth-graders.)

It should be stressed to Webelo leaders just how important it is to keep the boys on the advancement path. It has been seen and measured directly in the Toqua district of the Great Smoky Mountain Council just how important advancements are in keeping boys in Scouting.

In the graph on the following page, it can be seen that over a period of three years, the advancements of boys to the Webelos badge and to the Arrow of Light have steadily increased. Included in this graph are the total numbers of Webelos in the program of this district over a period of three years (1994-1996), and also the total numbers of Boy Scouts in the program. Although the numbers of Webelos have steadily declined (this trend was predictable--several years before, the Tiger Cub enrollment was down quite a bit, reflecting in the Webelo numbers in later years), the total numbers of Boy Scouts have steadily risen. This upward trend is directly accredited to the fact that more Webelos are advancing to the Webelos badge, to the Arrow of Light, and also that more boys have been enrolled in long-term camping programs over the past several years.

Statistics (Toqua District/Great Smoky Mountain Council) of Webelos badge and Arrow of Light advancements for the years 1994, 1995, and 1996:

<u>Numbers of boys receiving:</u>	<u>1994</u>	<u>1995</u>	<u>1996</u>
Webelos badge	147	163	236
Arrow of Light	112	163	189



Total numbers of:	1994	1995	1996
Boy Scouts	800	803	814
Webelos Scouts	881	874	824

In 1994, 147/881 (or 17%) of the Webelos earned their Webelos badge:

112/881 (or 13%) of the Webelos earned their Arrow of Light.

Those statistics improved in 1995, when:

163/874 (or 19%) of the Webelos earned their Webelos badge, and

the same numbers (163/874), or 19%, earned their Arrow of Light

In 1996, the percentages were even better:

239/824 (or 29%) earned the Webelos badge, and

189/824 (or 23%) earned the Arrow of Light

Even though the total numbers of Webelos declined over the three year period, the important thing is that the total number of advancements, as well as the percentages, went

up. This is a direct reflection of the increased emphasis made on advancements in the Toqua district during this period of time.⁸

Since it is so important to stress advancements with Webelos, it is advisable to appoint on the district level, a volunteer known as the "district Webelo transition chairperson". This person would be responsible for working with the unit commissioners, and the Webelo leaders, to help guide the leaders through the fourth and fifth grade Webelo years. A "tracking list" to follow all fifth grade boys should be initiated. This transition chairperson would encourage all Webelo leaders in the district to get a tracking list to them in order to give the fifth grade boys the special attention needed during this crucial year. This list should be prepared by October or November of the fifth grade year, in order for the transition chairperson to use it most effectively in assuring that all boys graduate to Boy Scouting.

Several months before the planned graduation, preparation should begin for the ceremony, or the "cross-over" to Boy Scouts. An impressive ceremony is in order, to emphasize not only to the boys, but to the parents (and to the pack in general), how important this step is in a boy's scouting progression. This ceremony should be jointly planned by the Webelo leader, Cubmaster, and Scoutmaster. Many times, the ceremony takes place at the pack's Blue and Gold banquet. If it is to be held earlier than February, it can be done at the holiday party, or in a special pack meeting in November. Perhaps a visit from "Akela" to this ceremony would be appropriate. Whatever the plan is for the occasion, it needs to have special attention to give it the importance it deserves.

The planning of the "cross-over", the joint activities, troop visits, and activity pin advancements, can all be aided by the pack's Unit Commissioner. These individuals most often have had Cub Scout experience--they many times have been Webelo leaders themselves, whose sons have graduated into Boy Scouts. Whatever their backgrounds,

⁸ Spreng, Bob; Toqua Advancement Chairman

their abilities, experience, and willingness to help need to be communicated to the Cubmasters and to Webelo leaders. This communication will be addressed in the next section.

The leader should also decide among all of the ideas that have been offered, which would work best with his/her Webelo patrol. Many of these ideas are "suggestions"--however, many are "essential" to the success of the transition. That distinction must be made by the individual leader, with the assistance of the Cubmaster and Unit Commissioner.

In summary, before the fourth grade year ever begins, the leader should:

1. Have a general idea of when the boys will move into Boy Scouts
2. Plan when to offer the various activity pins to coincide with:
 - day camp
 - Webelos badge requirements, and
 - Arrow of Light requirements
3. Have a definite goal in place for the fourth grade Webelos
4. Have a plan to network with Scoutmasters to schedule unit visits and joint activities

IV. The Commissioners

One of the concerns of administrative commissioners (council, district, and assistants) is to encourage the growth of the program. Maintaining the registration of a Webelo graduating into Boy Scouts is an excellent way to keep the Scouting membership from declining. However, membership is not the primary goal of the Commissioners--keeping a boy in Scouting is. "We can only instill the values of Boy Scouting into the lives of boys who join."⁹

The Commissioner should encourage units to register new members year-round. They should be alert to the need of regular recruiting and bring this to the attention of the unit leaders. (**Commissioners Fieldbook**) An excellent recruiting method is the graduating of Webelos into Boy Scouts.

Among the duties of a Unit Commissioners are: 1) to provide continuing program support to packs and troops; 2) to help establish a working relationship between the troop and the fifth grade Webelo dens of the pack; 3) to encourage and support joint activities as well as graduation; and 4) to promote participation in district and council transition activities, such as Webelos Woods. The key factor in transition in which the commissioner can take an active role is *the working partnership between the Webelo den and the troop*. (**Webelos To Scout Transition**) It is very important for the commissioner to take the opportunity to council with the Webelo leader to offer suggestions to establish that partnership.

Districts which put a large emphasis on the Webelo to Scout transition should be encouraging their Unit Commissioners to actively assist with this Scouting phase. Since Webelos are the best source of Boy Scouts, and 70% of all Boy Scouts were Webelos,

⁹ Webelos To Scout Transition; Graduation Plan; BSA

then Commissioners and key leaders should be making transition a priority. Among many other counseling methods, the commissioners can aid in communication with the very leaders involved--the Webelos leaders themselves, Cubmasters, and Scoutmasters--to assist each one with their role in the transition process. Commissioners are the keys to the whole process!

"Providing continuing program support to packs and troops" can be implemented by the Commissioners by encouraging the Webelo leaders to begin in the summer before the fourth grade year to plan their next year and a half of programs. Urging this leader to immediately request a den chief through the Cubmaster is an excellent place to start. The leaders need to begin teaching the boys that in Cub Scouting, their activities centered on the home and community. But in Boy Scouting, it changes. The activities will be in their organization meeting place and in the outdoors. (**Commissioners Fieldbook**) Preparing the boys for boy scouting, along with themselves, is an important concept for the Webelo leaders to have.

Probably, the best preparation a leader could make is to take advantage of training opportunities. The commissioner should always be aware of the level of training of the leaders with whom they work. It is the leaders' responsibilities to take the appropriate courses offered--Basic Cub Scout Leader training (including the Webelo section), Webelo Outdoor Leader Training, and as mentioned previously, Scoutmastership Fundamentals. After the basic Cub training in the fall, the leader should move directly into "SMF" in the spring, if it is offered by their district or council. The SMF program teaches troop organization, outdoor skills, and the "patrol method"--all those aspects of Boy Scouting that Webelos need to be exposed to in order to heighten their interest and excite them about moving into Boy Scouts.

The Webelo leader should encourage participation in those outdoor programs specifically designed for the fourth and fifth graders--Webelos Resident camps, and Webelos Woods (for the spring of the fifth grade year). A suggestion for an outdoor joint

activity could be the possibility of the fourth grade Webelos to attend part (or all) of a spring camporee with a Boy Scout troop. If the leader is assertive in promoting the outdoor program to the boys, then most of the Webelos will move on in to Boy Scouting and will remain active.

Providing program support not only to the Webelo leader, but also to the Cubmaster, is an important commissioner responsibility. This individual is the pack leader most commissioners come into contact with most frequently. In the Toqua district of the Great Smoky Mountain Council, an intense effort has been made to improve communication between Cubmasters and Scoutmasters by compiling a list of pertinent pack and troop information, and making this information available to all unit leaders. The pack information includes:

- Pack number
- Cubmaster's name and phone number
- Chartering organization
- pack meeting day, time, and location (example; first Monday, 7 pm; First Farragut Church of Christ)
- Webelo leaders' names and phone numbers

The troop information includes:

- Troop number
- Scoutmaster's name and phone number
- Chartering organization
- meeting date, time, and location (example; Tuesday nights, 7 pm; First Farragut Church of Christ)
- troop emphasis may be added, or a "troop profile" (Wise/Lec)

This project, co-ordinated by the Toqua Commissioners, was their first step toward directly assisting with the Webelo To Scout transition. The lists were compiled in

early fall, in time for the Webelo leaders to be able to use them to schedule unit visits; and were distributed at the October and November Roundtables. By providing the Webelo leaders and Cubmasters a list of troop and Scoutmaster information, and vice versa, the Commissioners were encouraging the communication between the unit leaders. Cubmasters could, at a glance, see the troops in their immediate vicinity, and invite Scoutmasters and/or Boy Scouts to pack functions. Conversely, Scoutmasters had a list of nearby packs, so they could "court" Webelo dens by inviting them to join in Boy Scout activities. Improving communication and information accessibility is a great way Commissioners can be of service to their units. "We know that boys succeed best in becoming Scouts when the Cubmaster, Scoutmaster, and Webelos leader work on their transition together, as a Scouting team." (**Webelos To Scout/ Graduation Plan**)

Unit contacts and visitations are methods Commissioners use to carry out their goal of unit service. In the fall of the year, it is very important that they make those contacts quickly--soon after the Cub Scout Round-Up--especially the contact to the new Cubmaster. It would be an excellent idea for the commissioner to schedule a time to meet with the Cubmaster (new or returning), to talk with them about their plans for their pack's year. At this meeting, the commissioner should approach the subject of the Webelo to Scout transition, educating the new Cubmaster about its importance, and re-emphasizing to the returning Cubmaster the need to keep boys in the program. The commissioner can also take the opportunity to suggest joint pack and troop activities throughout the year. Perhaps he/she can recommend a troop known for their impressive Courts of Honor, whose Scoutmaster would welcome Webelo visitors. Other joint activities to suggest are: inviting a Scoutmaster and Boy Scouts to attend a Holiday party to present a demonstration, or to a Blue and Gold Banquet to talk to the Cubs and their parents about Boy Scouting. The commissioner might suggest that the Cubmaster utilize Scouts who are in the Order of the Arrow for demonstrations or for Indian dancing performances. The subject of the "cross-over" needs to be covered with the Cubmaster to be sure that

he/she realizes the importance of this ceremony. Working directly with the Webelo leader in planning the graduation ceremony is something that the Commissioner can stress to the Cubmaster. He/she also needs to emphasize including the Scoutmaster in the ceremony plans.

If the commissioner staff is large enough to be divided into "Boy Scout" and "Cub Scout" commissioners, those working with the Boy Scout leaders need to take the opportunity in the fall to begin the discussion about transition. According to the Webelo to Scout Transition plan, the Scoutmaster "directs the establishment of a co-operative link between a troop and a pack. He/she selects and appoints Webelo den chiefs, encourages joint activities and graduation of Webelo Scouts into the troop. He/she sets the tone through the junior leaders" (**Webelo To Scout Transition**) So, therefore, it is the Scoutmaster's responsibility to initiate communication about the transition process. In the troop, it is recommended that one of the adults leaders become the "Webelo Resource Chairperson" to help as a liason with the Scoutmaster, Assistant Scoutmaster, and Webelo leader. An opportunity for the Commissioner to help these individuals is to assist this Resource Chairperson in getting a Webelo tracking list in October or November from the district's Webelo Transition Chairman. One of the goals in establishing open communication between pack and troop is for the Cub Scout to see first-hand, boy leadership at work. He must be made aware of his own potential, therefore becoming more confident and enthusiastic. (**Webelo To Scout Transition**)

One idea that the Commissioner needs to be prepared to address is that not all Scoutmasters are receptive to receiving a new patrol of Webelos. Helping the leaders grow to fit their units, rather than keeping the units small to fit the leadership is a concept that commissioners can help Scoutmasters accept. Sometimes unit leaders will decide not to accept new boys because they do not have enough help. The commissioner needs to explain to them that often, help comes from parents. Keeping boys out of the unit eliminates the possibility of their parents being involved. (**Commissioners Fieldbook**)

The Scoutmaster might try to conduct a Webelo parents' night to inform them about the troop and their outdoor program. Giving out a troop schedule for the year, informing the parents about summer camp, advancements, etc. are good ideas for Scoutmasters to use to try to involve more parents on the troop committee, and eventually in more active roles. New members add vitality, new ideas, and add new parents to the troop. Leaders who say that they want to keep the unit small because it is easier to handle may lack confidence. They may be running a "one man show" and will eventually weaken the program unless the commissioners help them find other interested adults to share the leadership. However, there is always a limit to a given leader's membership capability. Some can handle only fifteen boys, while others can lead fifty to sixty. In any case, the Scoutmaster must recognize that "without membership, there can be no Scouting". (**Commissioners Fieldbook**)

Another key individual that the Commissioner must not forget about is the Assistant Scoutmaster. This person's responsibility in the Webelo To Scout transition plan is to guide the new patrol. He/she serves as liason between the troop and the Webelo den, and helps plan joint activities and the graduation ceremony. According to the "Plan", this individual is "primarily responsible for the smooth transition of Webelos to Boy Scouts by working closely with the Webelos den chief, Webelos den leader, den leader coach, and the Scoutmaster". (**Webelo To Scout Transition**) Once the Webelos make the transition, it would be a good idea for the Scoutmaster to include the Webelo leader in the troop by inviting him/her to become the new patrol's advisor.

V. Interaction

The goal of graduating one hundred percent of all Webelos into Boy Scouting cannot be accomplished unless everyone involved is aware of and is committed to their responsibilities. The Commissioner has a vital role in this Scouting phase and must utilize his/her opportunities and skills to help it succeed.

The interaction that the Commissioner has with the Webelo leader should focus on the following : 1) helping the leader realize the importance of one hundred percent graduation; 2) planning the yearly activities with that goal in mind; and, 3) mapping out a transition plan and ways to implement that plan. The Commissioner should work with the support individuals, educating them in their roles; encourage Scoutmasters to "court" Webelo dens, making the boys feel wanted and welcome; encourage the involvement of parents so they will want their sons to remain in Scouting; and should stress the "essentials" and make suggestions.

The concept of "Webelos tracking" is an important method to use in the transition program. This is done on the district level by the "Webelo Transition Chairman", by the Commissioners, or by the membership committee. A system needs to be in place to identify and track each fifth grade Webelo. Follow-up should occur to maintain contact. **(Webelo To Scout Transition)** In the Toqua district, each spring, the District Executive does a follow-up on each fifth grade boy not registered in Boy Scouting. This is a wonderful way for the professional scouter to interact and follow up on the transition plan. It shows interest and concern for the boy from the Council level--the invitation to continue his future in Boy Scouting.

Another interaction that could come from the district level in the transition plan is the idea of a district-wide graduation ceremony (not to take the place of the pack's) at the

spring camporee, for instance, or as a part of Webelos Woods. (**Webelo To Scout Transition**)

Webelo leaders and Commissioners have the unique opportunity and the resources to make the transition of a Cub Scout into a Boy Scout occur very smoothly and successfully. The Commissioner is a teacher, counselor, and friend whom the Webelo leader needs to rely on to help them with their commitment to the Webelo Scout. Combined with the dedication of the leaders, this scouting team can work together to achieve the goal of one hundred percent graduation of Webelos into Scouting.

“We can only get the values of Scouting into a boy if we first get the boy in Scouting”. (**Webelo To Scout/Graduation Plan**)

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