

If You Build It, They Will Come – Or Will They?

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Piedmont-Appalachian College of Commissioner Science

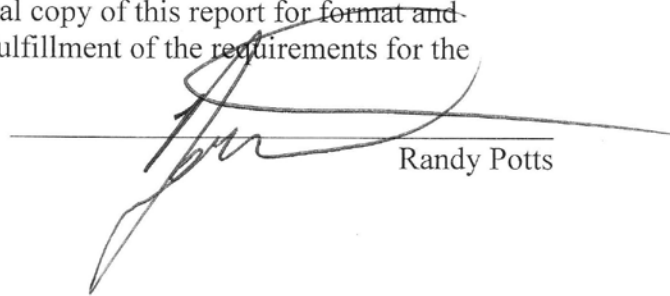
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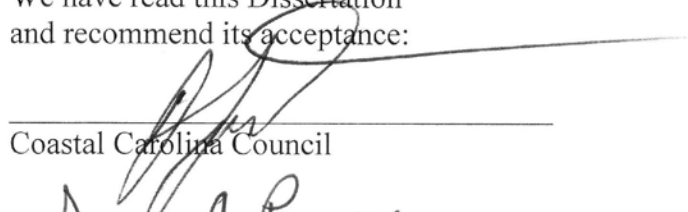
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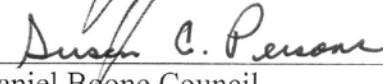


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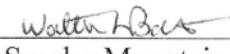
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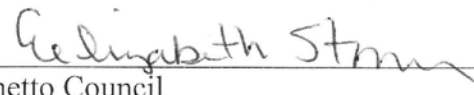
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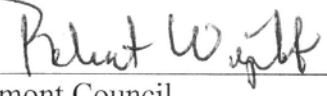
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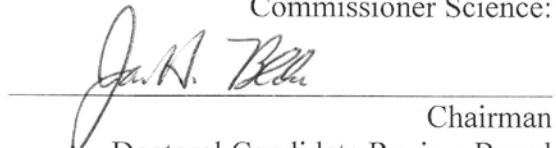


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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Maggie Stanley, who has retired from her years of service as Swamp Fox District's Cub roundtable commissioner. Her wisdom and warmth has inspired us to reach for what is possible.

I would also like to thank my "bench" of Scouting volunteers that support roundtable and provide feedback to help us continue to grow and support Scouting in Etiwan District.

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ABSTRACT

In 2014, Etiwan District's roundtable had about five people attending monthly. After visiting a neighboring district with a reputation for having a well-attended roundtable, Etiwan District has been working to increase attendance by using the framework that has been modeled by neighboring Swamp Fox District.

While attendance has increased, there is still room for improvement. The author's purpose is to examine the reasons that people attend or do not attend, hoping to determine ways to continue to increase attendance by discovering what people expect from a district roundtable meeting.

Volunteers in Scouting are very busy, trying to balance all of their Scouting commitments with their personal commitments. Scheduling is a huge obstacle to try to overcome when getting people to attend roundtable. Communication is another obstacle to overcome, yet it is essential to providing information about what people can expect to gain by attendance.

Ultimately, Scouting volunteers want to have value added for time spent.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the winter of 2014, I attended Coastal Carolina Council's Wood Badge course S5-550-14-1. At that time, I was a unit commissioner that was assigned to two units and attended our district roundtable meetings monthly.

Historically over my time as an attendee, there were approximately five people, including myself, that attended roundtable regularly. A typical meeting agenda was an overview of upcoming activities that were on our district and council calendar.

It just so happens that I carpooled to the two Wood Badge weekends with the current Etiwan District roundtable commissioner. During our 60-minute, one-way car rides, we discussed our current Scouting positions and ideas for possible ticket items. While we were in different patrols, we were based from the same unit and had been friends for a number of years. We encouraged each other and enthusiastically brainstormed ideas and thoughts about how we could truly make a difference in Scouting in our unit and district. Like so many Scouters, we both held multiple positions and discussed the pros and cons of which position should be our primary focus when writing our ticket.

Since she was in the position of a Webelos II Arrow of Light den leader, with less than two months in her tenure with the Cub Scout pack, I encouraged her to consider writing her ticket around improving our district's roundtable. She would have eighteen months to work her ticket. Since she would be leaving the Cub Scout unit and joining a Boy Scout unit, her future position had not been well defined and she faced the possibility of not having the ability to

complete her ticket once she left her current position within the pack.

While we had multiple discussions about her options, she ultimately chose to write her ticket based on her den leader position. Within two months of completing the Wood Badge course, Etiwan District's roundtable commissioner position was vacant.

CHAPTER II

THE SHOW MUST GO ON – BUT HOW?

Our next commissioner's meeting and district committee meeting focused on how we would fill our roundtable commissioner position, and the desire to increase attendance. I recalled my experience at Wood Badge and how several members of the staff and my patrol had invited me to attend a roundtable in our neighboring Swamp Fox District. I offered to contact the Swamp Fox Cub roundtable commissioner to see if members of the Etiwan District could attend an upcoming meeting.

I emailed Maggie Stanley, the Cub roundtable commissioner for Swamp Fox District, and arranged to visit on May 8, 2014. I emailed an invitation to all Etiwan District commissioners, district committee members, and unit leaders who were regularly attending our district's roundtable. I offered to meet and carpool with anyone who would be interested in attending. Our district commissioner, a pack trainer, and an assistant den leader accompanied me to roundtable that evening.

CHAPTER III

VISITING THE NEIGHBORS

Upon arrival, we were greeted by a volunteer who presented us with a “First Knight”, and asked to sign the attendance roster. After the meeting began, we were invited to the front of the room to introduce ourselves and exchange our “First Knight” for our first bead.

There were about fifty people in attendance and there seemed to be a lot of excitement over the beads. Everyone was wearing beaded necklaces and as beads were awarded for various events and activities, the Scouters in attendance were adding beads to their necklaces as soon as they were passed out.

There was a Wood Badge beading ceremony that evening. I thought that the attendance of approximately fifty people could have been attributed to that, but was told repeatedly that they had low attendance that evening, due to it being so close to the end of the school year.

When the announcement was made that it was time for breakout sessions, we, as guests, had no idea what was happening. We made a quick decision to split up and each of us would attend a different breakout session. Between the four of us, we were able to attend sessions for:

- Committee
- Boy Scout/Venturing
- Cub Scout den leader
- Webelos den leader

When everyone gathered together to close the meeting, Maggie Stanley awarded a spirit stick, the district’s traveling totem, and Swampy, the district’s traveling mascot. After the

meeting adjourned, Maggie chatted with us and offered to help support our efforts to build a better roundtable in Etiwan District, by talking to and mentoring the person that the district identified to assume the role of roundtable commissioner.

We gave a report of our observations at the next district committee meeting on May 22, 2014. In June, our district committee chair contacted me and asked if I would consider accepting the position as Etiwan District's roundtable commissioner. I agreed that I would do my best.

CHAPTER IV

ATTEMPTS TO INCREASE ATTENDANCE

In my personal experience, I had seen very little communication about what roundtable is, who should attend, and when it meets. Prior to becoming a unit commissioner, I had never attended as a representative of my Cub Scout unit. In fact, I didn't even know that it existed. My unit leader had certainly never promoted roundtable, so I figured that I was not alone. So, the first task I faced was the issue of communicating roundtable's existence and how to give people a reason to attend.

Annual Planning

Prior to 2015, the Coastal Carolina Council held an annual program preview at the end of July. A copy of the annual council calendar was distributed to anyone in attendance and each district was invited to set up a table to distribute event flyers and answer questions. Once the council calendar was distributed, individual units were encouraged to hold their annual planning meetings and schedule unit events that would allow them to attend and support district and council programs. After receiving feedback from units, indicating that most units wished to begin planning earlier in the calendar year, the Coastal Carolina Council began holding the annual program preview in May, beginning in 2015.

Over the summer of 2014, after accepting the position as roundtable commissioner, I decided to use the annual program preview as an opportunity to begin communicating with Scouters about Etiwan District's roundtable. I used the *Roundtable Planning Guide 2014-2015*

to create an annual schedule, including Cub Scout and Boy Scout breakout sessions, that I hoped would generate interest, increase attendance, and promote discussion (see Figure 1).

Etiwan District 2014 - 2015 Roundtable Schedule

The District Roundtable is an opportunity for unit leaders from every unit in the Etiwan District to exchange ideas, draw on experiences of others, and come together to celebrate the values of Scouting. The Roundtable is a resource for unit leaders to get the necessary information and resources to run effective and successful units. The Roundtable is the clearest channel for communication between units and the district committee. The Etiwan District Roundtable is held on the second Thursday of every month at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 2115 N Highway 17 in Mt. Pleasant. All leaders, committee members, volunteers, parents, and youth leaders are welcome to attend.

Core Value	Cub Scouts	Boy Scouts	Committee
August 14			
Cooperation	Join Scouting Night	Annual Plans & Budget	Recharter planning
September 11			
Responsibility	Pack Camping	Order of the Arrow	Journey to Excellence
October 9			
Citizenship	Good Turns Service Projects	Eagle Scout Service Projects	Community Service
November 13			
Respect	Special Needs Youth ADD/ADHD	Special Needs Youth ADD/ADHD	Recharter – Working Session
December 11			
Positive Attitude	Age Appropriate Activities	The Boy-Led Troop	The Role of the Unit Committee
January 8			
Resourcefulness	Den Chief Program Blue and Gold	BSA Program Awards	Communication
February 12			
Compassion	One Oath and Law Rollout	Transitioning - Cub Parent to a Boy Scout Parent	Succession Planning
March 12			
Faith	Cub Scout Adventures Why and What is Changing?	Merit Badge Counselor Training	The Relationship with your Chartered Organization
April 9			
Health and Fitness	SCOUTStrong PALA	To Uniform or Not to Uniform; That is the Question	Participation in District and Council Events
May 14			
Perseverance	Summertime Meetings Year-round Program	Summer Camp Preparation	Preparing your Annual Calendar

This schedule is subject to change. We are seeking volunteers to help make Etiwan District Roundtable more dynamic and useful. If you have experience with any of the topics listed above, or have some experience in an area that you feel could benefit others, please consider volunteering to lead a Roundtable or breakout session. If you are not on the District communications list, please contact EtiwanIT@gmail.com to be added. We would love to see you at an upcoming event.

Figure 1. Etiwan District’s 2014 – 2015 annual roundtable schedule.

This seemed to be well received within the district and was easy to communicate through email and social media. It was easy to manage and make changes when needed. At the beginning of the Scouting year, there was interest in the recharter process and representatives from unit committees were attending. But, once the recharter process was completed and submitted, attendance from committee representatives decreased enough to eliminate the committee breakout sessions from the schedule. While unit committee representatives were encouraged to continue attending, they began participating in the Cub or Boy Scout breakout session.

The yearly schedule helped with pre-planning and lining up guests or experts when they were needed. For example, in November, we had a joint session with all Scouters to discuss “Special Needs Youth and ADD/ADHD”. A Scouting volunteer who works as a child psychiatrist agreed to lead this session, provide some educational information, and suggest methods to help leaders provide more opportunities for Scouts with special needs, ADD, or ADHD to be more successful.

His professional expertise helped leaders to address areas where they could improve, such as being prepared by having planned meetings, activities, and den codes of conduct in place. It helped leaders realize that they needed to be responsible for self-improvement, rather than expecting the youth to adapt to situations that may not be within their control.

Additionally, a parent of a Scout with special needs agreed to provide insight from his perspective and experience. This meeting was well attended and positive feedback was received regarding the topic, as well as the joint session with all Scouters, thus paving the way for some

future joint sessions.

At the end of the Scouting year, it was determined that the annual schedule had been a useful tool for the year. The *Roundtable Planning Guide* for 2015 – 2016 was consulted and new schedule was created that was distributed, beginning at the Coastal Carolina Council's Annual Program Preview in May 2015 (see Figure 2).

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The District Roundtable is an opportunity for unit leaders from every unit in the Etiwan District to exchange ideas, draw on experiences of others, and come together to celebrate the values of Scouting. The Roundtable is a resource for unit leaders to get the necessary information and resources to run effective and successful units. The Roundtable is the clearest channel for communication between units and the district committee. The Etiwan District Roundtable is held on the second Thursday of every month at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 2115 N Highway 17 in Mt. Pleasant. All leaders, committee members, volunteers, parents, and youth leaders are welcome to attend.

Points of the Scout Law	Cub Scouts	Boy Scouts
September 10 Brave	"Super Cub!" Review New Leader Guides	How to Utilize a Junior Assistant Scoutmaster
October 8 Helpful	Cubs in Action Bad Weather Activities	Troop Guide and Instructor Roles
November 12 Reverent	Managing Boy Behavior	Chaplain's Aide
December 10 Trustworthy	Scouting and Special Needs	How to Integrate STEM into Troop Activities
January 7 Friendly	Blue and Gold Birthday Party	Webelos-to-Scout Transition
February 11 Thrifty	District Banquet	District Banquet
March 10 Cheerful	Cub Scout Camping Program	High Adventure
April 7 Kind	Recognizing Leaders	Historic Trails
May 12 Obedient	Summer Safety	Summer Camp Preparation

This schedule is subject to change. We are seeking volunteers to help make Etiwan District Roundtable more dynamic and useful. If you are have experience with any of the topics listed above, or have some experience in an area that you feel could benefit others, please consider volunteering to lead a Roundtable or breakout session. If you are not on the District communications list, please contact EtiwanIT@gmail.com to be added. We would love to see you at an upcoming event.

Figure 2. Etiwan District’s 2015 – 2016 annual roundtable schedule.

First Knight

Thursday, August 14 arrived and I determined that everyone would be welcomed as if it

was his or her very first roundtable. We were meeting in a new location, had a new roundtable commissioner, and an opportunity for a fresh start.

Everyone was asked to sign in on a sign up form and was given a “First Knight” on a plastic cord (See Figure 3). Following the meeting opening, all attendees were asked to introduce themselves, providing their name, unit, and primary Scouting position. Each attendee exchanged their “First Knight” for a plastic cord with a bead, symbolizing their attendance. Everyone was asked to bring their bead necklace with them each month and opportunities to add beads would be provided.

The tradition of the “First Knight” continues today.



Figure 3. First Knight given to anyone attending on his or her first night of roundtable.

Beads

On that first roundtable meeting on August 14, beads were awarded, too (See Figure 4).

Anyone who invited a new attendee was given an additional bead for his or her necklace. On this evening, everyone was “new”, but the concept of earning beads was set into motion.



Figure 4. Beaded necklace showing beads earned for attendance at roundtable and participation in Etiwan District or Coastal Carolina Council events.

Beads were also awarded to anyone who:

- Attended a Cub Scout resident camp
- Attended a weekly Boy Scout camp
- Participated in a High Adventure base
- Attended the Coastal Carolina Council’s program preview

A special wooden bead was awarded to anyone who helped to staff one of these events.

The distribution of beads continues today. While in our neighboring Swamp Fox District, I understand that it is the Cub Scout leaders that get the most excited over collecting

beads, in Etiwan District, our attendance is mostly Boy Scout unit leaders. I was not sure how well this concept of collecting beads would be received, but surprisingly, there are many leaders who have friendly banter and competition over earning beads. Additionally, the youth members of the Etiwan District's SeeWee Chapter of the Order of the Arrow have been holding monthly chapter meetings on our roundtable meeting night. The youth join us for our opening and introductions. Their attendance and desire to collect beads has also helped to increase interest and FUN during bead distribution.

The wooden beads are still reserved for staffing district or council activities. While I do not believe that the distribution of wooden beads and recognition at roundtable has increased staff representation from our district, I do believe that these wooden beads are coveted. During bead distribution, if I forget to pull out the wooden beads following a district or council event, the roundtable attendees that staffed will make sure to let me know.

Spirit Stick

Prior to closing the roundtable session, the first "Spirit Stick", or traveling totem, was awarded in Etiwan District. On this "first" roundtable, a 1 ½ in dowel rod was given to the unit with the highest attendance. The unit representatives were instructed to add any accoutrements that represented their unit or activities, and return the following month so the spirit stick could be passed to another unit in the district.

In neighboring Swamp Fox District, their traveling totem is awarded to the unit with the highest percentage of registered Scouters in attendance. Their district executive assists by keeping a current list of the number of leaders registered in each unit. A member of the

roundtable staff tallies the attendance percentage for each unit once the sign in process is complete. At the end of their meeting, the roundtable commissioner is able to award the spirit stick.

This particular spirit stick made it's way around the district for two years before being retired (See Figure 5). In August 2016, a new "blank" spirit stick was introduced. It was awarded to a unit that had two brand new members in attendance. The hope was to have that unit revisit the following month to return the spirit stick. Sadly, the 2016 spirit stick has not returned to roundtable.

In Etiwan District, we have a history of much smaller attendance at roundtable. We also do not currently have the support staff needed to calculate attendance percentages. Our spirit stick is used as a tool to increase attendance and excitement, but the goal is for every unit to take it at some point. It is generally awarded to a unit who brings the most new people, has the most in attendance, or is a unit that we have not seen at a meeting in some period of time.



Figure 5. Etiwan District Spirit Stick traveled around, visiting units, for two years before being retired and replaced.

Cubbie

In March 2015, at the Etiwan District Pinewood Derby, Cubbie closed his door on his annual travels with the Etiwan Cup (See Figure 6). The Etiwan Cup is the traveling trophy that is awarded to the fastest pack at the district's annual pinewood derby. At the 2015 pinewood derby, several commissioners decided that Cubbie should begin visiting units on a monthly basis and should begin his new adventures at the next roundtable.

In April 2015, Cubbie attended his first roundtable. He embarked on his first adventure that month. Upon his return to the May 2015 roundtable, his escort gave a brief presentation, outlining all of Cubbie's adventures, which were documented in photographs. Cubbie tends to visit units that have campouts, ceremonies, or are participating in district or council events.



Figure 6. Etiwan District's mascot, Cubbie, participates in unit, district, and council activities.

Food

Some months, our district executive surprises everyone with pizza and lemonade. This has been a huge hit, especially with the Scouts attending their OA chapter meeting. With teenage boys in attendance, there are rarely any leftovers.

Sign-In

When we started, the sign-in each month was a blank form that captured the name, unit number, position, and email address for each attendee. Once we realized that the sign-in process was delaying our roundtable start time, we found a way to improve this process, making it easier for attendees, record keeping, and allowing us to take advantage of time to network and socialize prior to the meeting.

Once an attendee visits roundtable, his or her information is captured and entered into an excel spreadsheet. Each month, a roster is printed and placed in the sign in area. Each attendee is asked to enter a check mark next to their name, indicating their attendance for the month.

Communication

The information captured during sign in has been used to create a district distribution list. Each month, a reminder email is sent to anyone who has ever attended roundtable, as well as each unit's Key 3. Members of the Key 3 are asked to forward the roundtable invitation to everyone within their unit. This, however, has proven to be a big obstacle to effective communication. Understanding that unit leaders are primarily focused on communication and operations within their own units, we have been trying to come up with solutions to increase the distribution of information within the district, without relying on unit leaders to do it. In May 2016, an "opt in" feature was added to the Etiwan District's website, www.etiwan.org (See Figure 7). Since beginning this in May 2016, 48 people have been added to the district's distribution list.



Figure 7. A screen shot of Etiwan District's website that allows Scouters, parents, volunteers, or Scouts to opt to receive email communication regarding district or council activities.

CHAPTER V

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In reviewing the literature, I recalled my personal experience from my 2014 visit to neighboring Swamp Fox District's roundtable. On that evening, Maggie Stanley offered her support and encouragement, but mostly, she had shown us what could be possible. Swamp Fox's program provided a model and framework for improvement within Etiwan District.

Boy Scouts of America had already provided the framework for a program and discussion material. All that was needed was a review of the *Roundtable Planning Guide* to plan an annual calendar that would be relevant to Cub Scout and Boy Scout leaders.

Over the past two years, attendance trends have increased, but they seem to have leveled off. Due to the low representation from Cub Scout units, I decided that the only way to know what obstacles and challenges we were facing was to ask. I needed to know if there were topics or issues that needed to be discussed that were not being covered in the *Roundtable Planning Guide*.

In searching the Internet for ways to increase roundtable attendance, I came across two surveys that I used to create the survey that was distributed within Etiwan District (3,4).

CHAPTER VI

METHODS

I created a survey, titled *Building a Better Roundtable*. It was created in Microsoft Word and as a Google Form. Copies were taken to roundtable and attendees were asked to complete them. The Google Form was distributed via email. All responses were captured in the Google Form. The responses gathered by the Microsoft Word version were manually entered into the Google Form.

CHAPTER VII

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Despite my efforts, I only gathered responses from 42 people. Based on the answers to the questions asked, the data gathered still provides some useful information.

“How Often Do You Attend Roundtable?”

Overall, I was not surprised by the responses given for how often people attend roundtable. The data indicates that nearly 43% of respondents attend every month or almost every month. 57% indicated that they attend occasionally, once or twice a year, or never (See Figure 8). This does show that there is plenty of room to improve attendance at Etiwan’s Roundtable.

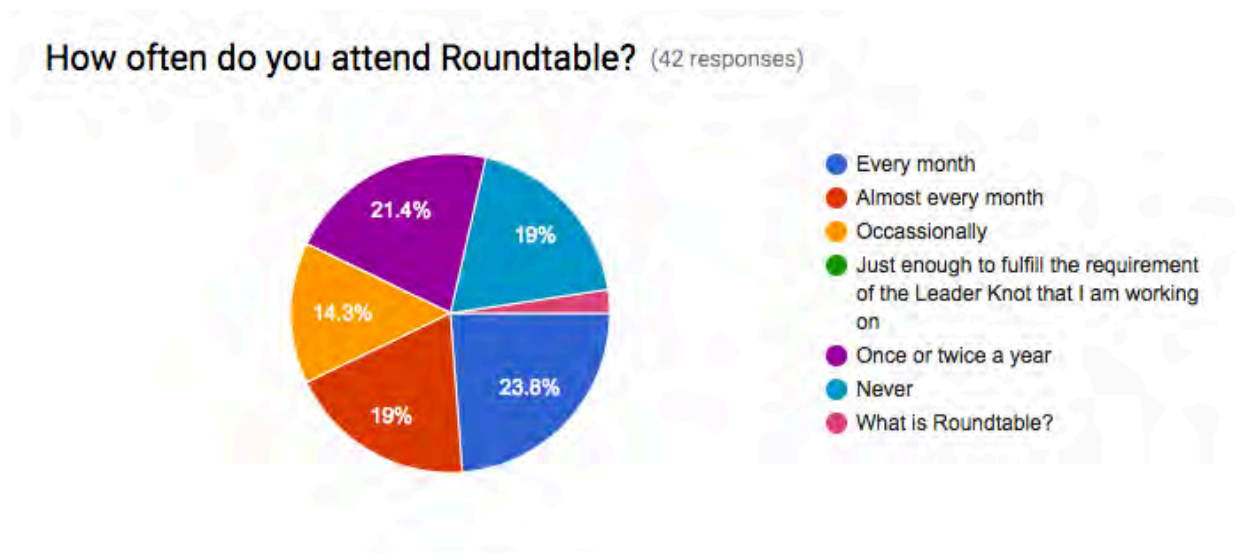


Figure 8. How often Etiwan District attends roundtable.

While no one responded that they are only attending to fulfill the requirement to earn the leader knot, the most surprising response was from a unit’s committee member that does not

know what roundtable is. This particular response was surprising because it came from a person in a troop that has a history of regular attendance from the Scoutmaster and committee chair. The responder has also attended Wood Badge and has completed his ticket. In fact, I served as his troop guide and ticket counselor.

The fact that we even received one response indicating that someone doesn't know what roundtable is, tells me that there is still plenty of room for improved communication within Etiwan District. One area that I feel needs to be addressed is making sure that we do a better job communicating **who** should attend roundtable. While we ask the Unit Key 3 to forward to all parents, Scouts, committee members, and volunteers, we need to have a discussion about this at an upcoming roundtable and see if we can expand our network through educating the unit leaders and committee chairmen that are attending.

“If You Do Attend, Please Let Us Know Why You Attend From Rating 1 (Least Important) To 6 (Most Important).”

Survey participants were also asked to rate their reasons for attending roundtable. An overwhelming majority of people chose “Fellowship and Networking” as their most important reason for attending roundtable (See Figure 9).

While efforts have been made to make the sign in process as easy and quick as possible, there never seems to be enough time for fellowship and networking. The fact that attendees really enjoy conversing with one another is evidenced after our closing. After the meeting closing and cleanup, there are often groups of people still hanging around conversing. After the lights are turned off and the church is locked up, the desire for post-meeting fellowship and

networking can be seen in parking lot.

Fellowship/Networking (34 responses)

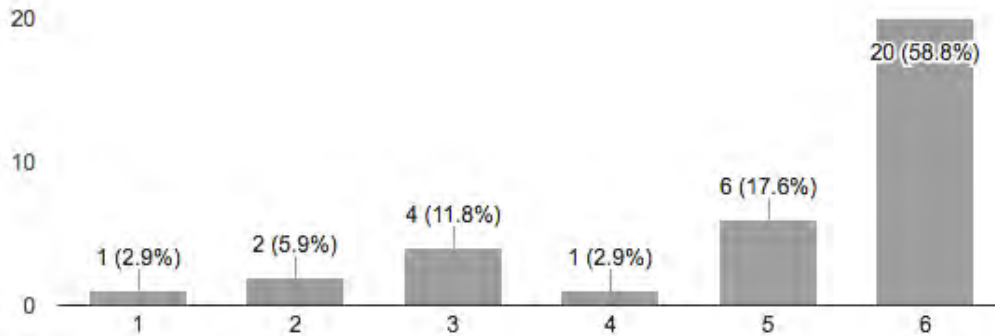
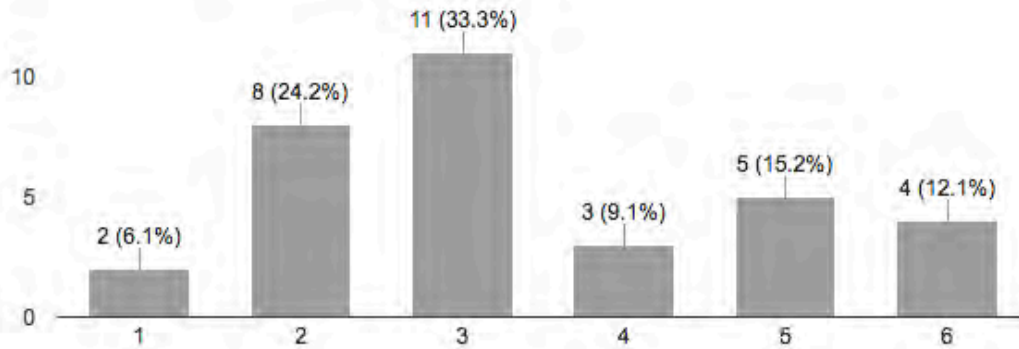


Figure 9. A majority of people attend for fellowship and networking.

Survey participants were also asked to rate the importance of “Outside Speakers” and “Discussion” (See Figure 10). I have chosen to discuss what can be deducted, based on responses, together. The data gathered suggests that people value discussion with each other, or in a break out session, more than they value outside speakers. This supports the data gathered for “Fellowship/Networking”. It also supports the definition of “What is roundtable?” that is published in the *Roundtable Planning Guide*, which states “It is a forum for sharing experiences and enjoying fun and fellowship with other Scout leaders.” (1,2) Group discussion is valued over having outside speakers a roundtable.

Outside Speakers (33 responses)



Discussion (35 responses)

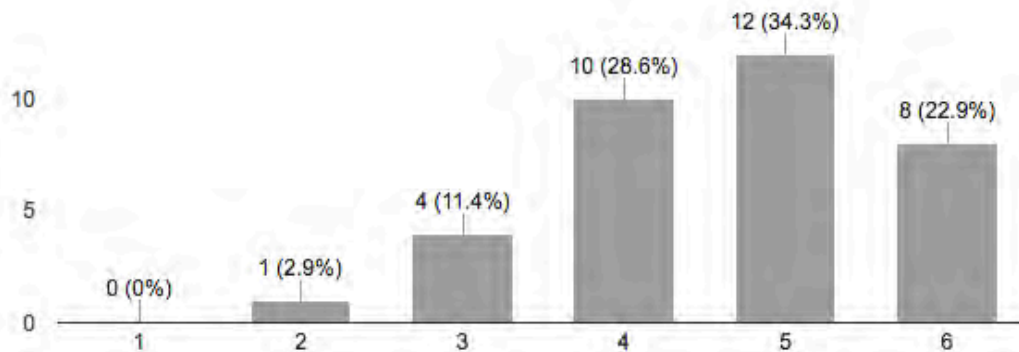


Figure 10. Group discussion is valued over having outside speakers at roundtable.

Each month, the agenda includes a brief mention of upcoming district or council events. If a representative from Etiwan District is planning or staffing an event, they are asked to promote, discuss, or answer questions about that event. They are usually given about 5 minutes

of scheduled time, but in my experience, people tend to run over their allotted time.

Etiwan District and Coastal Carolina Council do keep information on their websites up to date. When possible, we give a brief mention, but remind everyone to visit those websites for details. Frequent mentions of the websites serves to remind Scouters where they should go for current information about events.

Based on how survey participants rated “Announcements”, there seems to be a division between those who value announcements as important, and those that do not value it as being an important reason for attendance (See Figure 11). This tells me that while some are using the resources available to find current information and be aware of program, camping, and training opportunities, there are still many people who like to have the information given to them.

Announcements (33 responses)

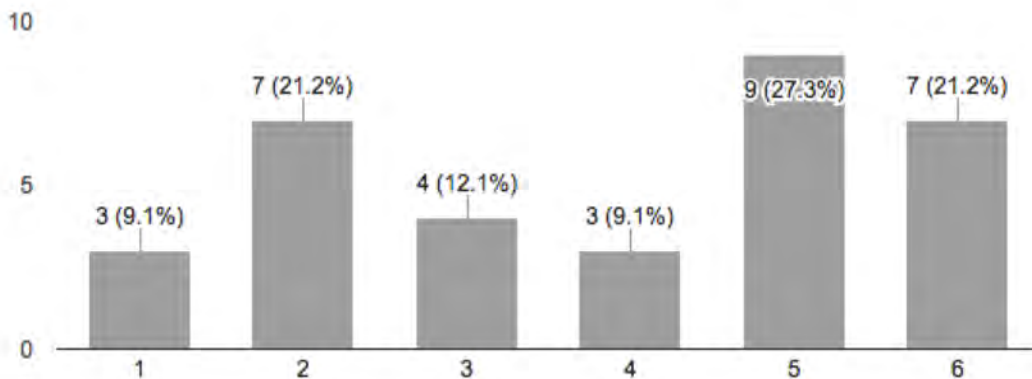


Figure 11. How announcements are valued.

According to the definition of “What is roundtable?” that is printed on the *Roundtable*

Planning Guide, it is “supplemental training for volunteers at the unit level. The objectives of roundtable are to provide leaders with program ideas; information on policy and events; and training opportunities.” (1,2) Since expectations are clearly listed in this definition, it is not surprising to see that many survey participants provided “Training/Instruction” as an important reason for them to attend (See Figure 12).

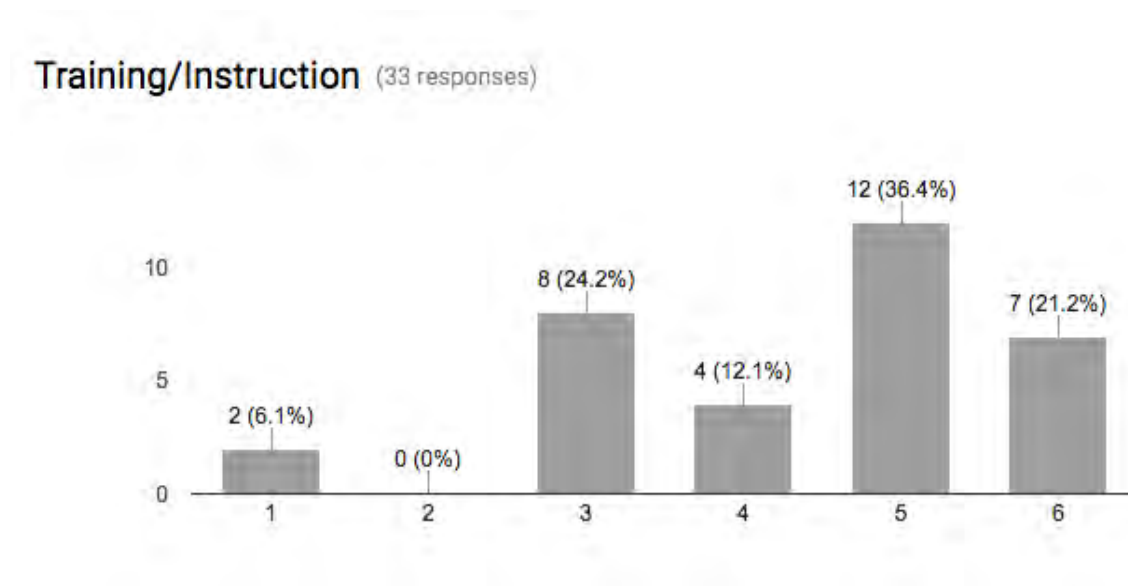


Figure 12. Training and instruction are valued as reasons for attending Roundtable.

“What Obstacles Do You Face When Planning To Attend Roundtable?”

Scheduling conflicts are the primary reason that people do not attend roundtable. Here are some of the comments that survey participants provided:

“Weeknights are inconvenient for me. I need to focus on getting kids fed and to bed for school the next day. Friday or Saturday would be better.”

“Usually driving to other kid activities.”

“Have 4 children with busy evening schedule and I work evenings.”

“Too many other Scouting commitments in conjunction with family commitments.”

“While I would like to attend, I work 50-60 hour weeks regularly in addition to be an reservist in the military, den leader for two dens and a cub master. Honestly I would like to attend but I am out of time.”

Attendance Trends

Since September 2014, attendance has been gathered from the sign in sheet each month and entered into a spreadsheet. In looking at that data, attendance has definitely increased, but has leveled off (See Figure 13). In September 2014, there were four attendees, which supports my memory of my personal experience with attending roundtable, prior to visiting Swamp Fox District.



Figure 13. Attendance trend at Etiwan District Roundtable.

Over time, Etiwan District averages about 21 people attending each month. There are a few months that we reached over 30 in attendance, so I was curious to review the topics that were on the schedule for those meetings.

On December 11, 2014, we reached 32 attendees. According to the email reminder, our district executive was available to accept recharterers. Additionally, Boy Scout units were asked to send their SPLs and ASLPs to serve on a panel to discuss and answer questions, thus leading the break out session topic of the boy led troop.

On March 12, 2015, there were 31 in attendance. According to the annual planning schedule and email reminder, our district Advancement chairman conducted Merit Badge Counselor Training.

CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Over the past two and a half years, we have tried to increase excitement by awarding beads for attendance, using a spirit stick as a traveling totem, and presenting Cubbie as a traveling mascot. We have had outside speakers from Medieval Times and Wild Blue Ropes. We have increased communication through developing a district email list and Facebook page. We have also used the *Roundtable Planning Guide* to create an annual schedule that we distributed at the Coastal Carolina Council's annual Program Preview. Efforts have been made to communicate early and often.

People attend roundtable because they value the opportunity for fellowship, networking, and discussion with other Scouting volunteers. They take advantage of learning opportunities such as Merit Badge Counselor Training. The data indicates that people attend for a variety of reasons, so it is important to have a varied program to continue to appeal everyone and keep people interested in coming.

In the future, I would like to continue building attendance and trying to improve our methods of communication. Based on feedback from survey participants, more attention will be given to identifying resources within the community, and inviting some outside speakers to attend roundtable. We will also continue to use the *Roundtable Planning Guide* and survey results to choose topics for breakout sessions that will provide opportunities for meaningful discussion and the sharing of best practices that will help strengthen units. Meeting topics will be well planned and a better effort will be made to have some visual aids or handouts to support

the information being shared. Meeting reminders will be emailed sooner to provide more time for unit Key 3 to distribute to their registered leaders, volunteers, and parents. I also intend to do some additional investigation into scheduling options. Cub Leaders did provide feedback about having younger children at home with early bedtimes. They are used to meetings beginning at 6:30 PM, instead of 7:00 PM. We may look at ways to help accommodate the need for these leaders to be home earlier in the evening by making some variations in our current schedule.



Scouting volunteers are busy balancing all of their responsibilities to their family, career, Scouting unit, and all their numerous other commitments. Scheduling conflicts were overwhelmingly the reason that people gave as their reason for not attending roundtable. While it is impossible to overcome scheduling conflicts of others, it is important to recognize that the additional time that a volunteer gives to attend roundtable is valuable. That volunteer deserves to receive something of added value for the time they are giving to attend.

REFERENCES

1. *Roundtable Planning Guide*. (2014 – 2015). Boy Scouts of America.
2. *Roundtable Planning Guide*. (2015 – 2016). Boy Scouts of America.
3. ERD Cub Scout Roundtable Survey. (n.d). Retrieved from <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/K2S5ZJJ>
4. What Topics Do You Want At Roundtable? (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.twinvalleybsa.org/files/d/usr/5/Boy%20Scout%20Roundtable%20Survey.pdf>

APPENDIX A

BUILDING A BETTER ROUNDTABLE SURVEY

 **Building a Better Roundtable** 

Name: (optional) _____ **Unit Number:** (P100, T100) _____

What is your PRIMARY Scouting Position? (Circle One)

Den Leader	Troop Committee
Cub Master	District Committee
Pack Committee	Unit Commissioner
Assistant Scoutmaster	Other: (Please specify) _____
Scoutmaster	

How often do you attend Roundtable? (Circle One)

Every month	Once or twice a year
Almost every month	Never
Occasionally	What is Roundtable?

Just enough to fulfill the requirement of the Leader Knot that I am working on

If you DON'T attend, please let us know why.

If you DO attend, please let us know how important the following is to you by rating with a 1 (least important) to 6 (most important).

_____ Fellowship/Networking	_____ Outside speakers
_____ Announcements	_____ Discussion
_____ Training/Instruction	_____ Getting out of the house

Below is a list of topics that have been discussed, or could be discussed at future Roundtables. Please check item(s) that interest you.

- | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Planning den and pack meetings | <input type="checkbox"/> | Planning event: Blue & Gold, Pinewood Derby | <input type="checkbox"/> | Effective Committees |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Fundraising | <input type="checkbox"/> | Scouts with Disabilities | <input type="checkbox"/> | Behavior Issues |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Webelos to Boy Scout Transition | <input type="checkbox"/> | Outdoor Activities: hiking, backpacking | <input type="checkbox"/> | Planning Service Projects |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Cyber Chip and Cyber bullying | <input type="checkbox"/> | Outside speaker (community resources) | <input type="checkbox"/> | Using a Campout to Teach Scout Skills |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Summertime Scouting: camps, Summertime Activity Award | <input type="checkbox"/> | Scout Parents: new parent orientation, involving them, utilizing talents | <input type="checkbox"/> | Retaining Scouts: Webelos II AOL, over 14, beyond Eagle |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Role of Advancement in the Scouting Program | <input type="checkbox"/> | Scout Advancement Tracking | <input type="checkbox"/> | Youth Leadership Development in Troops |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Troop Meeting Games | <input type="checkbox"/> | Pack Meeting Games | <input type="checkbox"/> | Training opportunities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Camp Menu Ideas | <input type="checkbox"/> | Dutch Oven Cooking | <input type="checkbox"/> | Religious Awards |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Recruiting | <input type="checkbox"/> | Den Chiefs | <input type="checkbox"/> | Leader burnout |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | PLC Meetings | <input type="checkbox"/> | Scout to First Class | <input type="checkbox"/> | Life to Eagle |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Scout Meetings with a High Level of Success | <input type="checkbox"/> | Running a New Scout Patrol | <input type="checkbox"/> | Conducting a Scoutmaster Conference |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | High Adventure | <input type="checkbox"/> | Patrol Method | <input type="checkbox"/> | Venturing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Running a Court of Honor | <input type="checkbox"/> | How to Save a Failing Meeting | <input type="checkbox"/> | Aims and Methods of Scouting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | How to Get Your Youth Leadership to Really Function | <input type="checkbox"/> | Commissioner Service: What is Commissioner? What can they do for me? | <input type="checkbox"/> | Eagle Coach/Counselor |

What obstacles do you face when trying to attend Roundtable?

I don't know what Roundtable is

Scheduling (work hours, extracurricular activities, youth sports)

Other scouting obligations (den meetings, unit committee meeting, pack meeting)

Lack of child care

Roundtable is rarely beneficial to me, so I do not attend

Other (please specify)

Do you have any skills or talents that you would be willing to demonstrate at a Roundtable? Please list them here and provide a way that we may contact you.

Please provide any other comments, feedback, or ideas that you have that will help improve the quality of Roundtable and increase attendance.

Thank you for taking the time to provide feedback and help us Build a Better Roundtable for YOU!