



100 Years of Scouting 100 ans de scoutisme



**Working towards meaningful change:
“If Scouting ain’t broke, don’t fix it??”**

An open letter to the Commissioners in Scouts Canada:

As I travel Canada and meet with Scouters and Commissioners, I am often asked about dealing with those members who are not contributing in a positive manner. New ideas and innovation in how we deliver program to the youth of Canada is a positive aspect of a Movement like Scouting. However I am being asked about how to deal with members, often long term members, who are not prepared to support the organization, and are simply not prepared to move forward with us as we evolve to meet the changing needs of youth.

By nature, Scouting is a traditionalist Movement. Yes that sounds like an oxy-moron, but Scouting in Canada must move forward to meet the needs of Canadian youth, while observing our values and traditions. I personally believe that Scouting’s core values do not change and are timeless; that Scouting must adapt and evolve in how we deliver program to youth within those core values; and that our strength is in our working together towards our common mission.

Scouting in Canada has undergone a period of immense change during the past eight years. Those changes fall into a couple of categories: administration and structure; governance; and program. Each of these areas was broken to some degree. Through the strategic directions process we are investing enormous energies in making many of the changes that are necessary.

Within administration and structure goes the stuff that we all “love to hate”: organizational structure, policies, procedures, bylaws, legislation, insurance, strategic plans, marketing studies and the Membership Management System. Scouting in Canada must operate in a business-like manner. We are subject to many of the same laws as businesses and certainly the same laws as other not-for-profit organizations, including the National Building and Electrical Codes, National Fire Code, insurance regulations, Income tax laws, new Privacy legislation and a myriad of others of which most volunteers do not have the time to track. This area was broken and needs ongoing fixing.

Within governance, changes were needed. When Bylaw II was approved, it was acknowledged that the work was not finished and that Scouting in Canada will need to continue to clarify our needs and define our governance structure.

Within program, the issues are loss of membership, relevancy to today’s Canadian youth and the recruitment, training and retention of motivated volunteers in a time where volunteerism is no longer as attractive to 25 to 40 year-old parents. This area is broken and we need to focus our energy on fixing it.

Change can cause stress and dissent. Scouting in Canada has not been immune from either of these influences.

The work to-date isn’t perfect and it isn’t finished. When Bylaw II was approved in May of 2002, the approval was not unanimous. However the majority has ruled. I believe we now need to work cooperatively in the ongoing evolution of our Movement in Canada.

While discussion and differing opinions are a part of our traditions, we have historically kept it within the Movement and have been able to work out our differences. There will always be those who wish to address issues arising out of change and there are legitimate mechanisms in place to do this. It is time to move on as we have done for nearly one hundred years.

Scouts Canada is both a “grass roots” Movement and a national Movement, with a long history of valuable service to the youth of Canada. It is a Movement that is justly proud of its excellent reputation of service to youth and adults. Scouts Canada has a duty to protect that reputation and the goodwill that flows from it, as well as other Scouts Canada resources which include, real property, intellectual property, finances, volunteers and staff. Every member of Scouts Canada has made an age-appropriate promise to carry out the Spirit of the Scout Law, and we must be wise in the use of Scouting’s resources to ensure they are available to achieve the Mission for present and future generations.

Scouts Canada must also diligently protect all resources including intellectual property. This includes any improper or unauthorized use of the term “Scouts” or any protected logo or symbol. Members are reminded that in Bylaws, Policies and Procedures (BP&P), there are policies and procedures on the approved uses of the Scouts Canada logo and trademarks, and that for other uses you must obtain written permission from the Executive Commissioner/CEO, on behalf of the Corporation.

The purpose of this letter is to ask all members to think about their obligations and responsibilities to Scouting in Canada, its adult members, and the youth we serve.

All positions are annual appointments. Re-appointments will be based on annual evaluation. Each Group Commissioner, Area Commissioner, Council Commissioner and the Executive Commissioner/CEO has a responsibility to review the applications for membership each year within their respective area of responsibility.

I ask that before you confirm appointment for the ensuing one-year term, that you ensure the applicants have the best interests of Scouting at heart. The Volunteer Recruitment and Development (VRAD) policies and procedures are in place and you have the authority and responsibility to ensure they are observed.

My objective in writing this letter is clarify our position. We need members and friends of Scouting to join us in a more positive move to the future and to concentrate their efforts on what is best in achieving the Mission. We are continuing our near-century long adventure. We need to revitalize our Movement and we need all of your positive energy to do so.

Yours in Scouting,



Glenn Armstrong, Chief Commissioner
and Chair of the Board of Governors

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