

# Significant Challenges, But Significant Opportunities

by Mike Scott

**A**t last November's Annual General Meeting in Ottawa, I was appointed as your new National Commissioner. What an honour to have been picked for this position! While I have been working at the National level for the past six years, I continued as a Scouter in my son's troop until June of 2001. I had two reasons for doing this. First and foremost, I wanted to share the

Scouting experience with my son, just as my father had done with me. The second – an added benefit – was that as Chair of the Program Committee I understood the many challenges section leaders face when working with youth members on a weekly basis. As the National Commissioner, I am committed to addressing as many of these challenges as I can.

I arrive in this job at a critical time in the life of Canadian Scouting. Everywhere we turn we are faced with significant challenges relating to risk management, leadership, and finances. As important as these issues are, they pale in comparison to the issue of declining membership.

Membership must be our first priority. We know that an increasing membership base would automatically provide solutions to many of the challenges ahead. To achieve growth, I believe we must focus on three pillars:

1. Bring Scouting to more Canadians through our core programs, as well as innovative and exciting new offerings designed or adapted to meet diverse social and cultural needs of Canada's young people. What do I mean? New program options like SCOUTSabout and Extreme Adventure are only the first steps in adapting our programs to suit particular segments of Canadian society. As long as we adhere to Scouting principles, our programs can look very different depending on the community they serve. Our Mission aims to affect as many Canadian youths as possible; we need to be flexible and adopt new complementary practices to attract members.

2. Develop Canada's future leaders by giving them significant and meaningful leadership roles in Scouting. This organization belongs to the youth of this country. As adult volunteers, we act as trustees and facilitators to assist them in running it. This is why Tyler Arrell, a youth



member, has been selected as our new International Commissioner. We are serious about giving youth the chance to experience leadership by doing, and proud to watch them take that experience away with them into adulthood. We are building Canada's leaders of tomorrow, today.

3. Recognize that the most important volunteers in our Movement are section Scouters who deliver programs to our members. If you are not working at the section level, your only function in Scouting is to help section leaders do their job. If there isn't a direct link between what you are doing and the delivery of quality programs, you're doing the wrong job. This is something that you will hear from me over and over again while I am your National Commissioner. My priority over the next three years is to focus on supporting the section Scouter to help him or her deliver quality programs to youths.

I am committed to working with you, our volunteers, to reach these goals. You can expect regular communication from me through **the Leader Magazine**, the national web site, and e-mails. I will also be traveling around the country to meet as many volunteers as possible, and to see Scouting in action. In these ways I hope to foster open dialogue with the people who make this organization the success that it is – the volunteers.

I would not have accepted the position of National Commissioner if I did not believe that together with Rob Stewart (our new President and Chief Executive Officer) and our many dedicated volunteers, we can meet the challenges facing us. Let's refocus our energy and turn Scouting into a growing organization. ^

Yours in Scouting,

Mike Scott  
National Commissioner

## NEW APPOINTMENTS

Please note the following new appointments to the National Management Committee:

- W Kim Derry, Deputy National Commissioner (Central Region)
- W Jeff Smith, Deputy National Commissioner (Program Services)
- W Tyler Arrell, International Commissioner