

**District Committee Meeting**  
**January 5, 2012**  
**One Bergen County Plaza**  
**Hackensack, NJ,**

**Key People**

Pat Stamato, District Chair

Leslie Sonkin, District Vice-Chair for Program

Robert Deutsch, District Vice-Chair for Development

Sal Bellomo, District Commissioner

Ian Meades, District Executive

See attachment for other attendees

**Opening**

Biff Van Kleef lead the Pledge, followed by the Scout Law as a repeat-after-me, recommending the technique for new Scouts and Webelos. Pat welcomed everyone, wishing them belated holiday greetings.

**Membership - We did not reach our goal**

Ian said that we ended 2011 with about 250 youth fewer than we started with, and that we were the only district that didn't make its membership goal. This set off a lengthy discussion about causes and remedies. Some points raised were:

- Ian said, "This year we had an unusual drop in Boy Scouts."
- Ian said, "There was a lack of recruitments this fall," noting that the recent flood took place in towns that are normally good recruiters. But other units simply "put it off, then put it off again."
- Biff pointed out that our district is "short one DE," and said, "I was told by many Scout execs that more DEs means more units means more boys. Flat out!"
- Ian didn't buy it, saying that we would have met our goal if units had done their normal recruitment, simply "due to the geographical size of our district." His opinion was that unit recruitment does not depend on whether or not a DE is available to assist.
- Jim Preciado agreed with Ian, saying, "They tell us Scoutmasters that there are kids who want to join Scouting, and all they have to do is ask." He told how he was recently spotted in uniform at Floodwood by two boys who asked how to join.
- On the other hand, Leslie told about units that scheduled recruitments, but the material they needed arrived too late. She said, "It's not just the units, but it's everybody's business. It's not just yours and yours, it's ours."

Pat ended the discussion with a quip that cut through the tension. He said, "We're not trying to point the finger at Ian or Scott. In fact, I blame Leslie!"

### **Membership - Keeping the Membership Committee informed**

Membership Chair Scott Lomberk said that he was not aware of the 250 shortfall until tonight, explaining that he doesn't have access to the Council's database. Ian proposed that Scott should make periodic requests to the DEs, who do have access, but Robert Deutsch instead asked Ian to provide the information as a matter of course to Scott, himself, and to Membership co-chair Hal Hochhauser. Ian agreed.

### **Membership - Rechartering units in January and February**

Pat asked Ian if the upcoming unit rechartering will affect the 250 shortfall, but Ian said that the two are unrelated, with one ending 2011 and the other kicking off 2012. He said that the only way they are related is that we could get information about retention.

About rechartering, Ian said that most Three Rivers units do it in January and February, with just a couple in other months, such as March or October. In response to two questions from Biff, Ian said that a unit expires on the last day of its charter month. but a tardy unit is given a 2-month grace period to get its papers in order, after which the unit and all its members become "separated." Insurance coverage and other membership benefits remain in effect during the grace period.

There was also discussion about Webelos who age out of the Cub program. Ian said that boys who successfully transfer to a Scout troop cannot be counted twice. About boys who don't transfer, Ian proposed keeping them on the Cub roster for as long as possible, giving adult leaders a chance to convince them to join a Scout troop. Robert agreed, saying, "Give it one last try to keep them in the program," but Biff questioned where the \$20 fee needed to retain such boys would come from.

Bill Metts said that some units fail to recharter on time or at all. He said that it's the Unit Commissioner's job to watch for such problems and prevent them.

### **Membership - Recruitment in Jersey City**

Pat said that Senior DE Joel Lieberman had a very good prospect for a new unit in Jersey City, but that he was reluctant to go into details without Joel being present. Pat said that grant money had been obtained through St. Peter's College, and that there was talk of as many as 200 youth. Pat allowed that it all sounded like "pie in the sky," but promised more details in the future.

### **Finance - Leadership FOS**

Bob Lilley said that he expected us to reach our goal by February and that he had a stack of cards for anyone who would like to make a donation tonight. Pat said that Leadership response was very good at the last Commissioner's meeting.

### **Finance - Units signing up for Family FOS**

Leslie said that Michealene Mason was not present tonight but that she usually handles unit sign-ups. Pat said that several units had signed up with Senior DE Steve Leonardi at the last

Roundtable, and Ian estimated about a dozen. Robert proposed making an FOS sign-up form part of the rechartering packet.

Someone said that a Roundtable might be a good place to brief unit leaders about the FOS campaign, especially new ones. He said that they have to know about the importance of scheduling a presentation as well as the importance of being the first to step forward and start the ball rolling by making the first pledge. Robert pointed out that Scouters who attend Roundtables "are the believers who don't need convincing." (Leslie called it "preaching to the choir.")

Barry Goldman said that his unit is unlikely to request a presentation and asked if anyone has the responsibility of contacting them. Ian responded that it is one of the things that DEs are supposed to do, saying, "It's me, Joel, or Steve."

### **Finance - Training presenters for Family FOS**

There was a lengthy discussion about the new curriculum for presenters and the need for us to move quickly. Points covered were:

- Ian asked who had attended a training session for presenters done by District Director Anthony Chirido in December. Only Pat attended, "Just to see what it was about." Pat went on to say that they decided that Anthony should redo his presentation at the next Roundtable.
- Ian liked the Roundtable as venue. He was anxious to have the training done as quickly as possible, since there were already two presentations scheduled for January, and the Council wanted to have presenters re-trained under the new curriculum.
- Biff and several others balked, saying that FOS presenter training was not appropriate for a Roundtable.
- Gerry Beatty proposed a solution, saying that her tight schedule didn't have room for an extra event. She proposed scheduling the FOS training for the night of the Roundtable, but at 7:00 PM, one half hour before the Roundtable is scheduled to start. Doing it in a separate room was preferable. There was general agreement. The next concerns were if Anthony will be available and if we have to clear the early 7:00 time with the Holy Name Medical Center.
- Sal pointed out that we may not need to hurry. There are only two FOS presentations scheduled for January, and presenters are available to make them, even if they haven't received the latest training. Bob joked, "I don't think the Council will turn down untrained money."
- Someone proposed that National should add Presenter Training to its online sessions, and Gerri suggested doing it locally with a Webinar or some kind of conference call.

### **Sports Dinner in March**

Pat said that the Council is running a sports dinner in March, but neither he nor Ian had details about date or location, although Ian said that the information is posted on the web. Ian's

recollection was that tickets cost \$400 per person, but said that our District will receive credit for \$200 for any ticket that we sell. Pat said that there is a possibility that he will receive one or more free tickets from a corporation that paid for an entire table but doesn't have enough people to fill all 10 seats.

### **Planning Events for 2013-14**

Bill Metts handed a sheet to Leslie that listed events our District will run during the 2013-14 session. Leslie wanted to be sure that Mark Wrightington and the others on the Activities Committee were aware of it.

### **Finalizing Events in 2012**

Bill also asked the Advancement Committee to finish plans for six events announced last September, when they gave months, but not specific dates: two in March, two in April, and two in May. On Bill's list were Pinewood Derby, Skit-O-Rama, Gold Rush / Pirate Quest, Swim Meet, "Touch of Summer" Camporee, and the Scout-Mobile Derby. (See below for the Pinewood.)

### **Dinner Dance Social - Fund-Raiser**

Pat asked the people present if there was interest in a District dinner-dance as a fund-raiser. Biff described preliminary discussions about when to schedule such an event, starting with October, but that was eliminated due to a Council Camporee and a Catholic Retreat weekend. Pat cut off the discussion about dates, and simply asked if people liked the concept. He said it will not be a Scout event, but rather a purely social event for adult District members to get together. He promised no uniforms and no fund-raising presentations. After looking again at her calendar, Leslie proposed October 20.

### **Planning two District high adventure events**

Pat said that he would like the District to organize two high-adventure events, one in the summer and one in the winter. Based on his experience and knowledge, Jim Preciado took the floor and made these points:

- Patriots' Path and Theodore Roosevelt (Long Island) Councils both run winter high-adventure trips, which Biff called "very successful." Jim allowed that those events would normally cause a conflict, but it turns out that neither has anything scheduled for January, 2013. Jim said, "We own January next year."
- In the past, Jim has run mini events or "entry level events" for younger Scouts to give them a taste of high adventure. He proposed something like it for the District's winter event.
- He agreed to work with Mark and Allen Sterk to plan.

Later in the meeting, Jim had additional information about Council plans for treks out of Floodwood (see below).

### **Bowl-a-Thon recap (Dec 29)**

Mark gave a summary of the Bowl-a-Thon, which he called successful with 275 bowling plus some others who registered but didn't come. He said that the event started off looking like "a logistical nightmare," but in fact it went fairly smoothly and raised about \$2,000 for the District. He called it a hybrid that combined the best ideas from the legacy Tantaqua and Twin Valleys events. He said that next year's event will pay more attention to attracting Scouts from the former Hudson-Liberty District, possibly by adding a third bowling alley or by having one of the two alleys located more to the south.

Mark said that the two locations were run at staggered times for the convenience of the organizers, but in fact that also turned out to be convenient for some bowlers. He said that some families who lived closer to location #1, went instead to location #2 because the start time worked better for them.

### **Tiger Tumble (Jan 21)**

Mark said that so far 74 Tigers had registered in advance, which boded very well. He contrasted that with last year when only 30 registered in advance, followed by 50 walk-ins. Thus walk-ins this year will make for a very successful event.

### **Klondike Derby (Jan 28)**

Leslie hesitated to say a lot about the Klondike, since organizer Allen Sterk was not present tonight. She was able to say that registration looks good so far and that there was recently a problem with the website that was resolved. She said, "Allen has staff but can use more," explaining that it's good to relieve someone who was out in the cold for a long time. Gerry said that she will run the fire-building station and that she can use another 10 on her staff. She promised them warmth, carpets on the ground, and the headquarters cabin nearby. Leslie reminded everyone that Allen specifically asked each participating unit to supply a volunteer staffer.

### **District Pinewood Derby (Mar 17)**

Leslie recommended using the Paramus Elks Club again this year, because it has a lot of space and a kitchen where they can cook hot dogs to sell with the other snacks. She proposed two tracks, one for Tigers and one for the other Cubs. She urged people to volunteer for staff, stressing what a memorable event it is for anyone who participated as a youth.

Leslie described a nice service that the former Tantaqua District offered to Cub packs without tracks of their own. She said that for a \$50 fee (it mostly covers gas), she and other volunteers would drive their own track to that pack and set up and run a Pinewood for them. This allowed many extra units to qualify their Cubs for the District-wide competition. She said, "Right now, without batting an eye, we've got eight scheduled." She asked for volunteers who can join in and lighten the load.

Mike Carp told Leslie that the former Hudson-Liberty District ran a district-wide Pinewood at the Hudson Mall, and suggested bringing her track there to serve several packs at once in order to get them to qualify. Mike added that the Hudson Mall liked having the Scouts there and that they have a huge parking lot. He said one year they got a local cable station to film the event. When Leslie asked Mike to contact the Mall, he said that, in the past, they found that things worked better when the DE made the contact. But he promised to help coordinate the event.

### **Window Display Week (Feb 5-11)**

Mark said that a flyer about the competition had been broadcast, but he plans to do a follow-up using an extra mailing list that Ian provided to him (see below). Mark explained that units were asked to find a suitable location and to mount a week-long display about themselves. He said that he preferred a store-front window, but an alternative might be a library. He named some of the display's minimum requirements, such as how to join, American and unit flags, etc. Photos will be submitted by e-mail and displays will be judged at a Roundtable. Prizes will be \$25 gift cards that Bob Lilley said he will buy from Campmor, two each for Scouts, Cubs, and Venturers for a total of six.

About the extra mailing list, Leslie asked Mark to forward a copy to Eric Dlugosz and to Norman Kasser, saying, "We need that list." *[Editor's note: A few days later, Norman asked Ian for a copy, but Ian assured him that all names he had were already on the Three Rivers distribution.]*

### **Silver Beaver nominations (Jan 31)**

Rich Curran said that he had a stack of blank nomination forms, saying, "They must be in the Council office by January 31 or they will not be accepted." There was some discussion about how many awardees our district would be allowed, but that ended when Rich pointed out that the Silver Beaver is a council-level award, with limits imposed by the size of the council, probably 8 or 9.

Rich described confusion that arose during last year's nominating process, when the Council asked for nominations and posted an NNJC form to be used. On the other hand, National has its own, different form posted on its own site. Rich said that NNJC never made it clear in advance that use of National's form would not be acceptable.

### **District Award of Merit (DAM) (Apr 15)**

Bill Metts said DAM awards will be presented at a dinner scheduled for Apr 15 and that he had a stack of wallet-size reminder cards that Eric had printed. The cost will be \$25 and the location will be the Paramus Elks Club. Ed Quinn had a copy of the roast beef menu and read it out loud.

Bill said that nomination forms should be submitted by Mar 15 and said, "We are entitled as a district to one awardee for every 25 units." With 198 units, Bill said that we are entitled to select eight, and then named last year's four awardees in the former Tantaqua District. Bill said that

they also plan to make some kind of "service to local unit" awards, but that is a work-in-progress.

Rich said that he had asked Asst. District Commissioner Kevin Kilroy for a list of past DAM awardees from the former Hudson-Liberty District, and Leslie asked those present to raise hands if they were also awardees (there were many). This triggered discussion about if Three Rivers should make awards even though it has not been in existence for a full year. There was also discussion as to whether past awardees from the former districts should be eligible for a second award based on contributions to Three Rivers.

### **Scouter of the Year Award (Feb 17)**

Ed said that the dinner will take place in the American Legion Hall in New Rochelle, adding, "The hall has been booked and I have the tickets here tonight." He said that the Nominating Committee will meet on Thursday at the museum and named the committee members.

### **Other events listed in the District newsletter**

Leslie held up a copy of the *Heckawee Herald*, and recommended scanning its list of events, some of which might otherwise escape notice, saying, "There's a lot of pertinent information that you can take back to your units." As examples, she pointed out a walk to benefit multiple sclerosis research, the Wood Badge Critter Breakfast, and a follow-up article about the Peace Light.

### **Handout with a list of District sub-committees**

Pat asked everyone to take a copy of the handout listing committees, including their chairs and their members. He asked people to review the names, but, more importantly, he asked the committees to meet, saying, "At the next district meeting we should be able to have full reports."

### **Advancement - New Eagle Project Workbooks starting in 2012**

Ed Ference said that the new workbook is available from National's website and described how he and the others in the Advancement Committee pass forms around for review, with a minimum of two people looking at each. He said that requests for change are passed on to the Scoutmaster and added, "I am willing to make a house call for a boy about to turn 18."

Robert asked Ed to estimate how many Eagle projects he might expect in 2012. Ed recalled that there were 255 boys last year in all of NNJC, and other people supplied numbers from the former Tantaqua: 52 and former Twin Valleys: 65.

Leslie urged Ed to supply information about Eagle Scouts in 2012. Ed said that he knows about Boards of Review but not about the ceremonies that Leslie, Robert, and Pat want to have certificates ready for. Ed said, "Before, we never had a newsletter. Now, everybody wants more information."

### **Online list of Merit Badge Counselors**

Bill Metts said that the online list, formerly divided into nine districts, has caught up with last year's consolidation and is now divided into three. He had advice for accessing the site, saying that specifying one search criterion will show the town where the counselor lives, but not his address, whereas the second criterion omits the town. He liked the first one better. In either case, the result goes on for 79 pages. Bill agreed that his announcement should be repeated at the next Roundtable.

### **Camping**

John Beatty said that work is in progress to come up with summer camp material to send to units. He said that he is not worried about a unit that sent 20 Scouts to camp last summer, since that unit "most likely has its own retention program." His target instead will be units that "went the provo route." John added that Camp Lewis has a nice video on You Tube, and Leslie said that a copy was also uploaded to our Facebook page.

### **Proposal for District contingents to go to Floodwood**

Jim Preciado described Venture-related meetings he had attended with staff advisor Mike Cowan, who is also the Camp Director at Floodwood. Points made were:

- Proposal to organize a district contingent to Floodwood, as the former Twin Valleys District used to do. Jim called it a program for troops with just "onesies and twosies." There was discussion about who would approve the concept and the steps to be taken. Jim said that the starting point would be to poll Scoutmasters for interest, and Norman volunteered to prepare a broadcast.
- Proposal to organize a "mini trek" for younger Scouts to get a taste of the Floodwood experience, possibly for just a weekend. He said that camping is allowed on the top of Floodwood Mountain.
- Mike Cowan encouraged using Floodwood for winter weekend camping, which triggered a discussion about bus trips and problems getting bad-weather access into the camp. Jim said, "We're working on that."
- Ed Ference said that Patriots' Path runs a bus trip to their own high adventure camp for President's weekend and King's weekend, leaving at 4:00 AM. Jim was familiar with those events as well as events run by the Theodore Roosevelt Council, and suggested hooking up with them.
- Jim also proposed running a trip to Northern Tier, saying that air fare in the winter is quite reasonable.

### **Training**

Rich Curran told about the recent BALOO training with about 50 attendees and also the upcoming 3-part training for Cub leaders on Jan 21. He said that some Cubmasters had already forwarded information about the Jan 21 event to their Den Leaders. Rich pointed out that the Youth Protection and "This is Scouting" sessions are also open to Boy Scout and Venture leaders and, as live training, are preferable to their online equivalents.

**Commissioner's minute**

Sal said that he now has seven Assistant District Commissioners (ADCs) and that he is currently working on which will be responsible for which communities and which units.

Sal said that units rechartering in January can come to this month's Roundtable with their paperwork and complete the process there (except for final signatures). He said that DEs will be present with laptops. Norman volunteered to broadcast Sal's offer prior to the Roundtable, including a checklist of things they should bring along. Sal said, "The reason we're doing this is so that we don't have to chase units down in May and June who were supposed to recharter in January and February. Sal said he has a complete list of this year's chartering access codes for all units, and will have it with him at the Roundtable.

Sal said that some Unit Commissioners have conflicts with his Thursday meetings. As a result, he is willing to meet with just ADCs, and then to let the ADCs schedule their own meetings with Unit Commissioners on a day that works better for them.

**District Committee Meeting  
January 5, 2012**

**Attendance**

Paul Adams  
Jim Africano  
Gerry Beatty  
John Beatty  
Salvatore Bellomo  
Greg Boyle  
Mike Carp  
Richard Curran  
Robert Deutsch  
Andrew Goldman  
Barry Goldman  
Robert Hastings  
Peter Hilaris  
Norman Kasser  
Bob Lilley  
Scott Lomberk  
Ian Meades  
Barry Messner  
William Metts  
James Preciado  
Ed Quinn  
Paule Rodriguez  
Leslie Sonkin  
Patrick Stamato  
Biff Van Kleef  
Mark Wrightington  
James Wrynn