

**District Committee Meeting
January 3, 2013
One Bergen County Plaza
Hackensack, NJ,**

Key People

Pat Stamato, District Chair
Leslie Sonkin, District Vice-Chair for Program
Sal Bellomo, District Commissioner
Steve Leonardi, District Director
Joel Lieberman, Senior District Executive
See attachment for other attendees

Welcome

Pat asked Biff Van Kleef to do the opening then welcomed everyone. He handed out agendas and membership reports. Leslie asked for a moment of silence in honor of Herb Bieri, calling him "an old, dear friend who was 97 years young."

Membership - 2-year decline

Pat was very concerned about the loss of close to 1,000 youth, 500 in 2011, and 400 in 2012. He said "We've got to correct that, and we need to have a conversation about it tonight." Joel explained that new Scout Execs Steve Grey and Pat Coviello intend to become more involved with each district's volunteers to ensure sustainable growth in membership, starting with the recent Membership Summit. Talking about TRD Membership Chair Susie Becker (not present tonight), Joel stressed that she needs new people in her committee, but "not the same folks who are currently doing Advancement and Activities." He said, "She took on that role, but it's not fair if she has to do the whole thing herself."

Joel said he wants "new blood" and challenged those present to come up with some names. He said, "You don't have to do the recruiting. If you give me a name, I'll spend time with that individual and explain what are needs are." In fact Joel had two names to start with: Henry Hahn, Michael De Bellis, and Warren had a third: Rose Duane.

Biff said that people who staffed the last five Wood Badge sessions would be good prospects. A second possibility would be the Membership Chair that any large Cub pack would likely have, suggesting that there might be as many as 20 of those. A third possibility might be a Webelos father who joined a Scout troop at the same time as his son. Biff said, "These are groups that we have not touched." Biff also wondered why we don't actively recruit Ventures, and listed 4 or 5 co-ed high schools that would be good places to start.

Gerry Beatty offered to recruit parents during the upcoming Klondike Derby. She said that there is usually one person on her staff at the fire-building station who could speak to parents who are "usually in a good mood" and have them fill out a form, and asked, "Tell

me what kind of information you want me to capture." Steve offered to give Gerry a few clipboards. Pat said that he and Sal can also try to get names at their hot dog stand.

In addition to the Klondike, Biff proposed the upcoming Tiger Tumble and the March Pinewood Derby, but some expressed doubts about the Tiger Tumble being appropriate, since parents there are still typically new to the program.

Joel concluded, "You know my simple philosophy: We have a great program and lots of things we love to do, but if we don't have kids, what good is it?"

FOS (Friends of Scouting) - Scheduling presentations

Steve pointed to a large poster board that listed all TRD units (about 185) and said that 33 had already scheduled an FOS presentation, two of which will happen shortly in January. He asked the unit leaders present tonight to verify that their units were among the 33. He said, "We're trying to move the FOS campaign from 12-months down to 4, so that we can wrap up by May." Biff said, "Unit Commissioners have got to contact their units and set up a date. If a unit flat-out refuses to schedule FOS and also refuses to sell popcorn, let me and Steve know." He joked, "Actually, Steve will follow up. They won't let me do it because I'm too nice."

FOS presenters

Steve said, "We have lots of presenters (he guessed 29) and we expect about 90 units to request a presentation, so if each presenter just did three, we'd cover all the units -- of course some do a lot more, as many as six."

Steve said that a Presenter Training session is scheduled to take place at the same time and location as the upcoming Roundtable, to be conducted in one of the back rooms by Pat Coviello. He said, "Even if you've taken training before, it's worth coming to this one in order to hear the new approach by our new Council leadership."

Steve said, "One of the problems has been getting pledge cards back." He then passed out samples of "this year's giveaway," which was a hand-held flashlight with a Scout logo and charged with a squeeze handle instead of batteries. He said, "I can't wait to give my first presentation with four Tiger Cubs helping me, and I tell them, 'You get one of these when you get me a card.'" He predicted that this giveaway will be far more successful than patches and magnets. Later in the meeting, Steve said that current thinking is not to burden the presenters with patches and other giveaways in advance. Instead a potential donor will get a flashlight for turning in the pledge card, and then receive a patch along with a thank-you note when the pledge is fulfilled. Mark Wrightington wanted to ensure that his single donation would result in four patches, one for each member of this family.

Steve said that last year's FOS goal was \$90,000, but we only raised about \$67,000. He said that this year's goal was dropped to \$75,000, which he felt was both realistic and achievable. About last year's shortfall, Pat listed a number of events that got in the way, such as the presidential election, a freak storm, an earthquake, Hurricane Sandy, and "an

upheaval at the Council office." He said, "When you look at all that, the numbers we turned in weren't bad."

Advancement

Pat greeted Fred Creswick, who handles advancement issues in the southern part of the district, then turned the floor over to Ken Dutcher, who made these points:

- **Eagle Boards of Review:** Ken said that over 75 Boards had been conducted in the northern part of the District (close to a record), and that he will soon have a total for all of TRD, which he predicted will be over 150.
- **Training for the new Eagle workbook (1):** Ken referred to these 2-hour training sessions as his "road shows," since they are intended to be held in various convenient locations. The next one is planned for Sunday Feb 20 (MLK weekend), probably at the Paramus Elks.
- **Training for the new Eagle workbook (2):** Ken said he intends to conduct other sessions on some February weekdays, and asked Pat to give him contact information to work out a location in Lincoln Park in Jersey City.

FOS - Leadership Campaign

Bob Lilley said that the district's Leadership goal last year was \$10,000, and that we exceeded it. Steve explained that there was a last-minute donation of \$300 that pushed us over the top. Bob handed out pledge cards and said that the 2013 goal is also \$10,000. He said that \$1,650 had already been raised, but Steve said that almost all of it resulted from donations made by the DEs. He said that the goal of the Leadership Campaign is for everyone on the Committee to give something, but in fact a Scouter's donation may be credited either to Leadership or to his unit's Family campaign. However, since units are not given goals to meet but the District is, "If you have a choice, give the money to the District."

Bob also asked those present to reregister as members of the Three Rivers District Committee, either as primary or secondary.

Training - Scoutmaster/Assistant Position-Specific (proposed Feb 2)

Ken Dutcher said that he had received several requests to do another session for Scoutmaster/Assistants and was therefore in the process of determining a date and location, with the likely choice being February 2 in Montvale. Alternate locations are the Paramus Elks and the Scout Museum. He pointed out that the session is a requirement both for a Scoutmaster to be "fully trained" and also to meet one of the requirements for the Journey to Excellence award. Instructors will be Ken, Dennis Ng, plus two more.

Training - Cub Leader Position-Specific (Jan 31)

Biff announced that this session will take place here (Bergen County Plaza in Hackensack) on January 31 using a new syllabus, which was first used during the Tiger University.

Activities - Bowl-a-Thon (Dec 28)

Mark reported 232 youth and adults coming from 21 Cub packs and 10 Scout troops. He estimated that the event raised \$1,700, but he still has an outstanding expense for participation ribbons. Mark found excellent cooperation at Montvale and the new Union City location. Leslie predicted that the 14 at Union City would grow as time went on, but Mark worried that a bigger turnout might bump up against the limited street parking.

Mark said that the number this year was down from last year's 265. The Montvale location was about the same as last year, but number at Parkway Lanes in Elmwood Park was much lower. Leslie asked people to give good feedback now in hopes of getting better turnout next year. Mark suggested that holding the event on the Friday before a long weekend might have worked against us.

Activities - Upcoming Tiger Tumble (Jan 19)

Mark said he was very pleased that 62 Cubs had already registered versus perhaps 40 at this point in past years, adding that lots more can be expected as walk-ins. Mark also had some good news for Joel, saying, "You know that list of registered Tigers you gave me? Well, about 30 who signed up for the Tumble are not on your list. That means that there are more than 200 Tigers out there."

Leslie recalled that the very first Tiger Tumble had just 14 attendees, whereas last year's had about 150, in spite of a day's delay due to a snowstorm. In response to Leslie's question about staff, Mark said he might be able to use a couple more, depending on how many Boy Scouts attend. He added, "Be sure to tell people with another little kid that siblings are always welcome. In fact, one of the kids who registered is named Isabella."

Activities - Upcoming District Pinewood Derby (Mar 16)

Leslie said that planning is ongoing for the upcoming Pinewood with the goal of ensuring that "It won't be anything like last year! This year will be very smooth!" She said that the next meeting will be a "think tank that will figure out the best way to organize the day." Under consideration is staggering the registration times. She invited anyone interested to attend the next meeting, saying, "We're open to all kinds of ideas." So far the location is not fixed, but Leslie favored the gym at the Rothman Center in Hackensack.

Activities – Local Pinewoods run by the District

Leslie said that 12 packs have booked days when Ernie Sprance will bring a track to their meeting place and run their Pinewood for them, but "We do need help! Ernie can't do them all – we can't do 12." To the suggestion of getting a second track, Leslie said, "Our problem is not the track – we have one – our problem is getting people to operate it."

Steve said that the Council has a track in the basement that can be borrowed if the unit is experienced and willing to run the event themselves, but Leslie said, "Honestly, most units don't want to be bothered. They just want us to come in and run the race for them." She said that the current charge is \$50 per race, but she was receptive to the idea of instead charging \$5 per Scout starting next year.

Biff proposed that an aluminum track would be lighter and easier to transport and carry, but Leslie said that she and Ron Geschwinder discovered that aluminum was just as heavy as wood and took even longer to set up.

Activities - Upcoming District Klondike Derby (Jan 26)

Allen Sterk said that all his "Mayors" are signed up, including a new one that took over a station due to an illness. Most of the other details have also been taken care of, such as the site, food, and insurance, leaving just last-minute add-ons to the volunteer staff. In response to Leslie's question, Allen said that no one had registered yet, but he was not worried, because that's how it goes every year with every Boy Scout event.

Side discussion about event flyers posted on the District website

This issue came to light last month when Gerry Beatty discovered that the online flyer for her June Fishing Derby had erroneous information. Her question was how it happened, but there was also the larger question of the accuracy of all the other flyers on the website and especially about how to prevent and handle errors. After a lengthy and sometimes heated discussion, it was agreed that Allen would vet flyers for Scout events and Mark would vet Cub events.

Activities - Proposal for a second Merit Badge Fair

Gerry said that Charles Binder from Rutherford Troop 166 asked about the possibility of a second Merit Badge Fair to be run in the southern part of the district. Gerry was not sure if Binder was also volunteering to run it, but she promised to assist whoever the organizer turns out to be.

Upcoming OA Lodge Banquet (Jan 6) and Scouter of the Year Banquet (Feb 8)

Ed Quinn said, "I hope everyone is aware that we're running an OA banquet at the Elks Club in Paramus, complete with a silent auction." He said that Eric Dlugosz was selected to receive the Scouter of the Year award in February.

Upcoming District Awards Dinner (Apr 14)

Rich Curran said that the District Awards Dinner will take place at the Paramus Elk Club, but then realized that no one had spoken to the Elks (done in past years by Neil Bookspan). Rich urged Scouters to apply for training awards, so that they could receive "knot" badges at the dinner, saying "I have a secret that I want to release tonight: You fill out the application and turn it in to me. It's that simple!" Pat joked, "It seems like a lot of work..."

In response to Pat's question, Rich said that recipients for the District Award of Merit are selected by a committee made up of past recipients, who will meet a month prior to the dinner, most likely after the closing of the March 7 District Committee meeting. He said that we are entitled to make seven DAM awards and that nominations must be submitted to him prior to that March 7 meeting.

Biff and Mark volunteered to organize the dinner and asked Jim Africano to verify the Sunday April 14 date with the Elks Club, and Pat proposed 1:30 or 2:00 PM.

OA - Three Rivers Chapter

Kevin Dolce introduced himself as the OA Chapter Advisor for our district. He asked Scoutmasters to use the OA website to schedule an election for their troops. He also suggested that troops should also nominate their adult leaders for membership, especially the Scoutmaster, pointing out that adult eligibility requirements were recently changed.

Kevin said that the TRD Chapter will be in charge of running the first of three Ordeal weekends, so he will need a lot of youth volunteers. It will take place in May at No-Be-Bo-Sco. He also noted that the OA Trade-o-Ree will take place on March 10.

Upcoming Wood Badge Dining Out (Jan 12)

Warren Dressler said that the date and time are the same, but the location was changed from one site to another, both within William Paterson University, and promised that everyone who registered will be informed. Warren spoke highly about guest speaker Hab Butler and his credentials. He encouraged attendance even by non Wood Badgers and said that pricing was set to make the event affordable for spouses and children.

Warren mentioned the "knot" awards that Scouters may wear, and told of how someone asked Butler about all the knots sewn onto his Scout uniform, saying, "Hab could have knots going up to his shoulder if he wanted." Apparently Butler never used to wear them until someone advised him that knots would give him instant credibility to strangers who didn't know him. Pat joked that Warren himself has no knots and thus "has no credibility."

Scholarships for Upcoming Wood Badge Course (May 17)

Warren said that money raised during the Dining Out goes into a scholarship fund "for people who have problems with the Wood Badge fee." He said that three had been awarded last year, and two the previous year, with some going to Scouters in our district. Warren explained that scholarships typically pay for one third of the fee, with another third coming from the unit, and the last third from the Scouter. The unit pays, because it will receive some of the benefit, and the Scouter pays, because "we think he should have some skin in the game." However, the rule is sometimes bent with the scholarship fund paying two thirds. Warren concluded by saying that next year's event will be held jointly with Patriots' Path and will take place at some new location.

Upcoming Trainers' EDGE Course (Feb 2 and Feb 23)

Warren said that the EDGE course "has really worked out well for people," but he was not certain of the location. He said, "It's worth the price if you want to brush up on your presentation skills." Sal said Patriots' Path Council will run another Trainers' EDGE course on Feb 23 in Clark, which will be convenient for people who have a date conflict with Feb 2.

Council Training Calendar

Gerry asked if the EDGE session had been posted, which triggered a discussion about how the various online calendars are organized. Warren said that when you bring up a display for a single month in "calendar layout format," there's a small drop-down in the upper-left corner that acts like a filter to change which events are shown and which are hidden. In order to see a calendar page devoted strictly to training events, Warren recommended going to the NNJC home page and clicking on the left menu "Training" entry, since it has a better filter. Gerry said that she likes being "able to see a global list," and others agreed, but Warren warned that a given calendar page can become really crowded.

Camping Committee

Leslie said that Camping Chair Barry Messner was not present, so any announcements will be postponed until the next meeting. However, Pat found a stack of flyers about Camp Lewis on the table and asked everyone to take one. *[Editor's note: It turned out that the Lewis flyer was unauthorized and in fact had erroneous information.]*

Commissioner's Minute

Sal started by saying that the Three Rivers Commissioner staff was in far better shape than the other two districts combined, with about 50 Commissioners "on paper," but about 40 working actively. On the downside, Bill Metts said that we have 46 units not covered. Because most of the 46 are in the southern part of the district, Sal asked Tom Gingerelli of Kearny Pack 305 if he would be willing to join the staff, saying, "It would be nice if you can do it, but, if not, you may know other people in that Kearny-Jersey City area who might be amenable." Sal guessed that a good portion of the TRD membership decline took place in the southern area, and expressed his hope that the Commissioner staff could work together with the new Membership Committee in order to "reverse the losses."

Sal concluded by thanking his staff, including Unit Commissioners, Assistant District Commissioners, and Roundtable Commissioners, saying, "I couldn't ask for a better group of people."

Hurricane Sandy Thank You

Leslie thanked all the units and individuals who donated to the Hurricane Sandy drive, which is now in its last stages. She said, "The amount of donations was unbelievable and we made three different distributions to people all over New Jersey and Staten Island." She said that donations are now "closed," and that the last distribution will be gift cards slated for a church in Nutley. Jim Africano said that he had heard on a news report that some \$444 million in cash was donated.

Leslie said that one of our recipients was the Center for Food Action, which is currently in a bind. She said that they would normally provide Christmas dinners for some 1,200 needy families or homeless, but this year they had to limit it to 800. She concluded, "Even

though the Council is no longer accepting donations, please don't forget these people. You can donate directly to the Center for Food Action."

Bob Hastings had a second thank-you for people who participated in the Basket Brigade. He said, "Ken Hesse and a couple of Scout units assembled baskets for Little Ferry, Moonachie, and Hackensack." Leslie said that she, Jim Africano, and members of the OA also participated.

Chairman's Minute

Pat said that the merged Three Rivers District had "jelled," but that we now have to concentrate on the future, especially membership, finance, and program, and in that order of precedence. He said, "We need the membership," and urged people to bring in new adult volunteers to work on membership, saying, "In two years time we lost 1,000 kids. If we lose another 300 or 500 next year, we'll bet out." He predicted that such a loss would result in loss of our DEs and loss of our ability to create a program for the Scouts. Pat said, "Sal, Steve, and Joel said that our district is ahead, but we're not ahead if we lost 1,000 boys." Pat thought that our finances and program would do okay, but said, "When you leave tonight, please think about membership." Referring back to the heated discussion about flyers with erroneous information, Pat said, "Please remember that we're all on the same team. Sometimes it might not seem that way, but in fact we're all pulling oars in the same direction."

District Exec's Minute

Joel reminded everyone that next month will be the district's annual meeting and urged people to ask their Chartered Organization Reps to attend and vote. He said, "We need to make three official notices, so this announcement will be one of them."

Joel pointed to a stack of packets that units will need to recharter for 2013 and asked unit leaders and Unit Commissioners to sign for and take them as appropriate, saying "We need to be clear as to who has the packets in order to know how to follow up in March or April." Joel said that he will personally visit units that need to renew in January.

Referring back to the heated discussion about flyers with erroneous information, Joel said, "Sometimes we mis-communicate and emotions can run high and people's feeling get hurt, and we just can't afford to have that. We're here trying to impact the lives of children, and we have to find a way to work through that kind of stuff."

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Attendance

Jim Africano
Gerry Beatty
Sal Bellomo
Greg Boyle
Fred Creswick
Rich Curran
Eric Dlugosz
Kevin Dolce
Warren Dressler
Ken Dutcher
Tom Gingerelli
Bob Hastings
Ken Hesse
Norman Kasser
Joel Lieberman
Steve Leonardi
Bob Lilley
Bill Metts
Lillian Molnar
Dennis Ng
Ed Quinn
Leslie Sonkin
Pat Stamato
Allen Sterk
Biff Van Kleef
Mark Wrightington