

District Committee Meeting
March 7, 2013
One Bergen County Plaza
Hackensack, NJ,

Key People

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

Sal asked Biff Van Kleef to lead the opening. He said that District Chair Pat Stamato is ill and that District Vice-Chair Leslie Sonkin will arrive later. He also asked those present to stick to the agenda to prevent a lengthy meeting.

Membership - Rechartering in Progress

Steve pointed out the handout with March membership numbers and said, "We're in the middle of rechartering." He said that TRD has about 109 units scheduled to recharter in January and about 100 more for February. Of the 100 January units, some 79 had still not completed the process and were thus officially "lapsed." However, Steve explained that about half of the 79 had in fact submitted paperwork, but with "issues," officially designated as "defective charters," and will require assistance from the Unit Commissioners or DEs.

Steve said that submissions are now being inspected more rigorously, and that defects that did not used to hold up paperwork now do so. As an example, he cited missing signatures on application forms for new adults. Steve held up a blank form and pointed to a signature block on one of the cover sheets labeled, "... I have read, understood, and accept..." and said that this signature authorizes a background check to take place.

Rich Curran asked about the follow-up procedure needed to remedy defecting paperwork, which Joel described as a series of e-mails that eventually get sent to the Scoutmaster or Cubmaster. Norman pointed out that a missing signature would require a physical paper form to go back to the Scoutmaster, to which Steve replied that the Council will accept an e-mailed authorization, which is then stapled onto the defective form.

On the handout, Steve pointed to "Youth this year" set at 4,561 and predicted based on experience that the number would go down as charters come in and are processed. He said that Cub packs typically lose membership, while Scout troops remain fairly steady.

Membership - Minimum Number of Boys

In response to Bob Hastings' question, Steve said that a unit roster must have a minimum of 5 boys to be considered active. He added that Latter Day Saints (Mormon) units are the

only exception, and that even special-needs units must have 5. Barry Goldman said that one Cub Pack used the online rechartering system and was not rejected with just two Cubs on the roster.

Membership - Lapsed Units and Dropped Units

In response to Ken Hesse's question, Steve said that the online system allows him to access a lapsed unit in order to work with its charter, but a lapsed unit is cut off from any advancement-related activity. On the other hand, when the 2-month grace period expires, a lapsed unit becomes "dropped," and no access of any kind is allowed. He said, "Since we can't use the online system to recharter a dropped unit, they have to start over again with hard copy."

Membership - Starting Rechartering Earlier

Speaking as a Unit Commissioner, Ken proposed starting the recharter process in September or October, instead of January, thus setting off a lengthy interchange of ideas.

- Steve said that each unit receives a packet of papers prior to rechartering, with one sheet specifying the unit's online access code for the current year. He said, "All you really need is the charter code to go online."
- Steve said that an experiment was tried last year to streamline the process by eliminating the packet and issuing codes as soon as they became available, two months prior.
- Barry proposed making up packets well in advance, say, September, and giving them to the Unit Commissioners to hold until needed. Just as soon as the recharter codes are available, the UC can add it to the packet and "hit the road, speak to the unit leader, and tell him to get started."
- Steve said that packets are actually available well in advance, but they are delayed by "the chain they have to go through," such as a DE waiting for the next Roundtable. Barry said, "Then let's start that process in September."
- Steve said, "Ideally, the recharter code would show up automatically in the unit leader's 'My Scouting' page."
- Steve said that the "Charter Agreement" sheet should be signed and turned in with the other paperwork. The sheet is one of those included in the packet, but is easily obtained elsewhere -- Steve called it a "stock item."

Membership - Units that Don't Cooperate

Lillian Molnar asked for guidance on how to handle one of the units that she is a Commissioner for, saying, "People don't want to give their Social Security Numbers, and they don't have current Youth Protection training." Steve was adamant about SSNs, and

said, "An adult who doesn't want to give his SSN will have to find another organization to join! They will not be registered!"

Joel said that Council Registrar Tyrone Manning is willing to "step aside" while an adult uses Tyrone's computer to enter his SSN in privacy. But Lillian was not impressed and said, "You're talking about people who feel inconvenienced to begin with, and now you tell them they have to go to the Council office." Steve joked, "What if that person withheld his SSN because he doesn't want us to run a background check. Sounds like someone we don't want registered!" Turning serious, Steve told Lillian, "This is a good topic to bring up at a Commissioner's meeting."

Family Friends of Scouting (FOS)

Biff started by thanking all the FOS presenters. He joked that Steve is so focused on FOS that "he won't answer his phone unless it's about FOS." Biff said that our goal is \$75,000 and that we currently raised a bit over \$18,000, or 24%, which he characterized as "We're not good, but we're not bad." He said that he wanted to schedule a presentation for any unit represented here tonight, and he also asked if anyone here was willing to become a presenter. Steve said, "We have 105 presentations scheduled, and there's no doubt that we'll make our goal if we do all 105. We just have to make sure that they all take place."

Community FOS - The TRD Ad Journal / Calendar

Joel said that the Council will again start printing a "Program Planning Calendar," and that the Three Rivers DEs have been selling ad space to various merchants, with 100% of the proceeds going toward the TRD Community FOS campaign. Thus, instead of asking a merchant for an outright gift, we asked them for \$125 and a copy of their business card to appear in the margins of the printed calendar. A merchant can also ask for more space up to a 2-page centerfold.

Joel said that he and DE Oliris Ramos had already "hit up" EMS, Campmor, and Ramsey, but he said, "Everybody knows a local barbershop or appliance repair -- people you see regularly who do business with Boy Scouts." He said that we can tell the merchant that 15,000 Scout families will see his ad. The merchant will also receive a copy so he can see the ad for himself.

Joel said, "We've never tried this. We've always been under the impression that Scouting can't sell advertising, because... Well, nobody was ever able to specifically say we can't." In response to Ken's question, Joel explained how to ensure that TRD will get credit for any sale.

TRD Event Calendar for 2013-14

Bill Metts said that he is close to completion with just a few more blanks to fill in, such as the swim meet ("Follies"), and the technology event to be run by Gordon Beattie. Leslie arrived at this point and asked Bill about the swim meet, saying that she found a good potential location. She also asked Bill about the location of the District Camporee that Dan Chazin had agreed to organize. When Bill said that Dan had selected No-Be-Bo-

Sco, Biff objected strenuously and said that Dan should be instructed to choose a different camp. But Leslie insisted that the event chair makes the choice.

A New Job for Leslie

Leslie announced that she had agreed to "step up" as Assistant Council Commissioner for Program. She added, "I would like to find a successor to my current position," explaining that she will continue as District Vice-Chair for Program until the next election. Several people expressed disappointment and wondered why Leslie would not hold down both jobs, as done by several others in the room. Leslie responded, "Nothing is changing right now."

Scott Lomberk as Chair Pro Tem

Leslie and Sal both left the meeting at this point, and Scott Lomberk volunteered to chair the remainder of the meeting.

Commissioner Meeting Calendar Conflict

Scott said that Sal will inform his Commissioner staff whether or not the March 21 meeting will take place, due to a conflict with a Council-level session that same evening.

Commissioner Recruitment

Biff said preliminary discussions were held at the Council about going out to Scout troops to ask for people to serve as Unit Commissioners. Joel said that the intention is to have our best UCs shift their focus to the low-functioning units that really need them. The UCs for high-functioning units would come "from units with 30 adults on their roster." He proposed that one of those extra Assistant Scoutmasters could serve as a UC for a high-functioning unit. Biff pointed out that these new UCs would have fewer duties to perform.

Activities - Pinewood Derby (Mar 16)

Scott said that Leslie will shortly inform us of the location she found for the upcoming Pinewood Derby. Mark Wrightington asked Norman to broadcast a special single-subject message as soon as possible, and Scott asked those present to forward the message on to their own e-mail lists.

Activities - Pirate Quest (Apr 6)

Biff said that the event will take place at "Camp Alpine owned by the Greater New York Councils," which triggered a side discussion about how to best publicize the location so people will not show up at NNJC's Camp Alpine by mistake. Biff asked the Scouters who were on staff last year at the Gold Rush to sign up again this year. He suggested that the theme for the 2014 event might be "Journey to Mars."

Activities - District Award Dinner (Apr 14)

Mark said that the committee came up with a fund-raiser possibility and passed around sample mock-up place mats whose border was printed with mock-up business cards. Mark guessed that \$25 would be a fair price to charge in order to cover the cost of

plaques or other awards. Ken proposed that any leftover money could be used to cover the June barbecue.

Biff passed around flyers and said that the Elk's Club had asked us to change the event time from last year, now 1:30-5:00 PM. Barry joked, "The 'dinner' is really a lunch." Ed Quinn was astonished that no one had told him of the time change and said, "I've already printed the tickets with the old times!"

Rich Curran said that he had not received a single nomination for District Award of Merit (DAM). Lillian asked Rich if he might dig out the nomination forms from last year that were not approved, but Rich insisted that nominations had to be turned in fresh every year. Rich said that he will attend the March 12 Roundtable and will accept nomination forms. After that meeting ends, prior DAM recipients will stay behind to review and decide on this year's awardees. Norman said that the nomination form is available on the District website.

Rich expressed his thanks to the people who volunteered to organize this year's dinner: Biff, Ed, Mark, and Barry. Rich reminded everyone that a new "Unit Leader Award of Merit" is available.

Activities - Rocket Launch (May 6) and World Conservation Weekend (Jun 1-2)

Ken said that the Rocket Launch will take place on May 6. Ken said that the annual World Conservation Weekends are being shifted from September to June, with June 2013 as the first of these. *[Editor's note: The prior weekend occurred recently on Sep 22-23, 2012.]* Ken is hoping to use Camp Lewis again.

Activities - Northeast Trade-o-Ree (Mar 10)

Scott announced the upcoming Trade-o-Ree at the Guardian Angel Church in Allendale starting at 9:00 AM. He said that at least 10 "patch gurus" will be present with huge numbers of patches and other memorabilia to sell.

Camping

Biff said that there will be a camp promotion at this month's Roundtable.

Training

Ken said that nine Scouters had attended the March 2 Scoutmaster/Assistant training session, and that 5 or 6 had also received Youth Protection training.

Rich said that the Council Training Committee had scheduled twin sessions for May 3-5, but had only posted or publicized one. They agreed to fix it after Rich pointed out the lapse. The sessions are IOLS + OWLS; that is, "Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills" for Boy Scout leaders, and "Outdoor Webelos Leaders Skills." Rich said that both training sessions will take place at the same time at Camp Lewis, but in different sites. Rich vented a bit by complaining how the Council Training Committee always seems to downplay training for Webelos leaders, saying, "It's been like this for 20 years!"

Biff said that the Council will run a BALOO course for Cub leaders on two consecutive Mondays at the Council office, March 11 and 18.

Advancement

Scott said that we need someone to represent TRD at an Eagle ceremony on May 16.

Ed Ference said that an update is planned for the new Eagle Project workbook, probably in June, but troops will continue using what they have now.

Advancement - Merit Badge Counselors (1)

Bill said that one of his positions in TRD is "Dean of Merit Badges," and that he had "stumbled across" an online requirement for existing counselors to reregister. He advised people to reenter their current list of badges covered so as not to lose them, however any new badges will require a paper application. Bill said that a limit of 10 badges was set by the Council's Board of Trustees. The site also asks for dates of Youth Protection and Merit Badge Counselor training.

Bill said that a problem arose when NNJC was formed and he found that counselors not affiliated with any Scout unit were dropped, probably because their Youth Protection was not current. Bill also advised people to log into MyScouting.org to check out their training profile to find dates for YPT and "Merit Badge Counselor Orientation". If the latter is not present, Ed advised carrying a certificate of completion to Tyrone at the Council office to have it added.

Advancement - Merit Badge Counselors (2)

In response to Steve's question, Bill said that he had not received any application forms since Glenda Socha stopped working at the Council office. Steve was clearly unhappy with the application process and proposed that it could be "tightened up." He and Bill ran through the process, including the step where Council Advancement Chair Del Coonce adds names to the database, which Bill called "an intricate process".

Norman posed the scenario where a counselor-to-be mails an application to the Council office, never hears back from anyone, and contacts Steve for verification. Steve described the steps he would take to do the research. Norman continued his scenario by having a Scout, his Scoutmaster, and the maybe-counselor all assuming that everything is okay, ending with a signed-off completion. Bob Lilley was concerned that the Scout's Eagle requirements might be in jeopardy, but Ed Ference assured him that the Eagle verification process does not go into that kind of depth.

An inspirational reading

Bob Hastings read aloud an essay with advice to Scout leaders. In it the author talks about how people believe in God based solely on faith and without proof. In the same way, a leader should have faith that his Scout can achieve something, and not look for any kind of proof beforehand. The essay's second point was that some things need to be believed

before they can be seen. With boys, we have to believe in their abilities in order to see them.

District Director's Minute

Steve said that BSA National has a "Membership Standards" meeting scheduled for May, and that our Council is soliciting opinions from its Scouters in two different ways. The first will be an on-line survey module, soon to be posted on the MyScouting website *[Editor's note: In fact that was not the method used. Instead Scouters received e-mail messages that directed them to the survey site.]* Steve said that NNJC will send five delegates to Texas to cast votes.

The second way that the Council will gather input is by conducting two meetings with 50 invitees each, where people can express their opinion. He said, "Our hope is that we can send our delegates to the meeting with a sense of what the opinion is within the council."

Steve said, "The important thing for us to remember is that their focus is not really what we're about. We're about the Scout Oath and Law and delivering a sound program."

**District Committee Meeting
March 7, 2013**

Attendance

Jim Africano
Salvatore Bellomo
Van Kleef Biff
Rich Curran
Eric Dlugosz
Kevin Dolce
Ken Dutcher
Ed Ference
Barry Goldman
Bob Hastings
Ken Hesse
Norman Kasser
Steve Leonardi
Joel Lieberman
Bob Lilley
Scott Lomberk
Bill Metts
Lillian Molnar
James Preciado
Ed Quinn
Leslie Sonkin
Mark Wrightington