

**District Committee Meeting**  
**May 2, 2013**  
**One Bergen County Plaza**  
**Hackensack, NJ,**

**Key People**

Pat Stamato, District Chair

Leslie Sonkin, District Vice Chair for Program

Eric Makar, District Vice Chair for Finance, Membership, and Advancement

Steve Leonardi, District Director

See attachment for other attendees

**Opening**

Many flyers were available on a table by the entrance, including tonight's agenda. Biff Van Kleef led the Pledge and the Scout Law. Pat asked Biff to show off his customized "Three Rivers Assistant District Commissioner" polo, which he obtained during the last Roundtable.

**New Vice-Chair Eric Makar**

Pat introduced Eric Makar as the new Vice Chair for Finance, Membership, and Advancement. Eric said that he is currently a member of the Pack Committee for Lyndhurst Pack 86 and also a Webelos Den Leader, and was formerly a Scout in Bayonne Troop 25. Pat joked about Eric's Bayonne roots and then said, "Welcome aboard!"

**Side Discussion about "Membership Standards"**

Eric described the unusual rainbow-colored square knot emblem on his uniform as the unofficial "all-inclusive knot" worn to show support of allowing gays into Scouting. Biff joked that, because Scout policy is expected to change to allow some but not all gays into the program, that Eric will have to change to half a square knot. Biff also described a pin worn by a participant at camp school that said "I'm Staying," which he explained as "No matter what the decision on gays will be, I'm staying in the program." Biff said he expects to receive a pin in the mail.

**Membership: Numbers (End of April 2013)**

Steve said that the current count of 3,863 youth is 466 lower than the same time in 2012, and the current count of 172 units is 6 lower than 2012. However, Steve warned that the numbers are still in flux because "We are still in the middle of chasing down units that have not yet rechartered." He said that 17 units are marked as "dropped," but he expects as many as 14 to convert back to "active." Steve then continued from that assumption, which would raise the unit count to 186, which would allow the District to end the year with positive unit growth. On the other hand, if each of the 14 units added 15 Cubs or Scouts, we would still end the year down some 300 youth.

### **Membership: Steve's "Hit List" of "Lapsed" Units**

Steve had a color-coded list of "lapsed" units not yet rechartered, with unrecoverable units in red. Biff asked if it might be possible to identify problem units earlier in the year, such as October. Steve responded that the Commissioner Staff should make that decision, noting that none of the lapsed units on his list have a Unit Commissioner assigned. In response to Eric's question, Steve said that we currently have 81 Scout troops and 65 Cub packs.

### **Membership: Spring Recruiting**

Steve said, "We have a new Membership team that is in the process of forming," and explained that their first task will be to encourage units to do spring recruiting of Kindergarten and 1st graders. Steve said, "This will be a good year to do it, but there's a problem with spring recruiting because packs don't do anything all summer." He described a surprised parent in September who suddenly recalls and asks, "I joined Cub Scouting?" Steve proposed offering at least two summertime events to such families, such as the June Fishing Derby.

Biff proposed that each of the three districts run two summertime events, such that families have six to choose from, but Steve said that there are only two events so far: our Fishing Derby and Lenape Trail's Cub Fun Day at the end of June. Steve thought there might be a second fishing day at Camp Yaw Paw.

Ken Hesse proposed inviting families to a Saturday or Sunday at Camp Lewis as summer camp is winding down but staff is still present. He proposed running "just a normal day at camp." Steve was worried that the camp staff would be anxious to get home, but Ken thought they would be willing to stay on in order to do the promotion. Norman Kasser pointed out that Lewis is planning to keep summer camp activities going through Aug 9. Steve responded, "Maybe we could do it in conjunction with summer camp. That would be best." Ken made an additional point, saying, "When parents get up to the camp and get comfortable with it, they'll be ready to sign up next summer." He added, "The crew running the camp now is much more open to ideas like this."

### **Summer Camp: Profit or Loss?**

Biff told about his recent stay at Camp School and a course he took on camp accreditation. He said that NNJC is one of 50 councils that agreed to have its camps accredited with the hope of achieving gold level, which can be posted on the camp's web page. Biff said, "It's tied to year-round finance. If a Council is in financial difficulties like ours, National will recommend that they close the camp. That's what's coming. For us it starts this year. Camp should not be a drain on the budget for the whole Council."

Warren Dressler objected and said that our camps made money last year, adding, "Well, not all of them." Pat said, "Lewis made money last year." Warren said that the Treasurer's Report at the last Council annual meeting said that profits from activities including camping were important in "carrying the Council."

### **Membership: Recruiting in Lodi**

Ken said that he is trying to restart a Cub pack in Lodi with three successive Fridays devoted to recruiting, starting this Friday. He invited people present to come to assist at the Civic Center. He also hopes to restart the Scout troop, saying, "We invited everyone from Kindergarten through high school." So far he received 5 Cub responses and 2 Scout responses.

### **Finance - Family FOS (Friends of Scouting)**

Biff said that we are currently at 60% of our goal to raise \$75,000, with some 19 presentations planned for June and other units after that. Biff said that he had tried to contact the 19 to finalize dates, such as when they might hold a Court of Honor, but had been mostly unsuccessful, saying "On Monday I'll try again." As for May presentations, Biff passed around a sheet with firm dates but blanks where a presenter is needed. He also asked people familiar with the June units to contact them to get a firm commitment and date.

In response to Steve's question, Biff doubted that we would raise the full amount by June, but he was confident that it would be reached by year's end, saying, "If we get to \$75,000 by June, I'll be tickled pink." He reminded presenters to be sure to obtain a "kit" prior to making their presentations. Bob Lilley joked, "I already have one flashlight."

Steve told about a recent presentation he made at a Court of Honor two weeks ago, starting with "Sometimes we say 'No' for other people." He said that the families of the troop he spoke to did not have a presentation last year, nor the prior year; that is, the Scoutmaster had said "No" when asked for permission to present. Steve said that he had collected pledge cards during the ceremony, but didn't look at them until he got to his parked car. He said, "I leafed through the cards seeing \$90 or \$100, totaling about \$350. But the very last card was a pledge for \$500!" Steve said, "It really made me take notice again of the people who appreciate Scouting and have the means to support more than just their own child and his troop." He concluded, "A lot of times people say 'No' for other people, such as 'The economy is bad...' and 'Everybody is poor...' and so on, but you never know what will happen."

### **Finance - Unrenewed Gifts**

*[Editor's note: This is for a person who made a \$100+ donation last year but has not yet done anything this year.]* Biff said that he had called prior donors but mostly had to rely on leaving a voice mail except for one who agreed to renew. Pat urged Biff to continue with the project this week, but Biff said he is still working on finalizing Family FOS dates.

### **Finance - Leadership FOS**

Bob Lilley had a list of District Members-at-Large, all of whom are expected to donate either to the Leadership FOS campaign or to the Family FOS campaign by way of the units they are registered with. He said that we are currently at 68%, but the other names on his list are still not filled in, saying, "If you haven't made a contribution, all I want to

know is if you're doing it through the unit or through the District." Bob said that those still blank by next week will receive a letter and added, "Our goal is to be done by the end of June."

### **Finance - FOS Letters to Families**

Biff picked up from Bob's comment about "letters" and said that the Council intends to send a letter to every family registered with a unit that did not have an FOS presentation. Steve corrected Biff by saying, "It won't be every unit. The first target group will be the units that said 'No' to a presentation." After that it will be "healthy" units with 20-25 boys on the roster. Bill Metts proposed another target, citing a pack where only 6 families made a contribution out of 53 on the roster. Steve told about something tried last year where the Scoutmaster was asked to sign a form letter after his unit's presentation ended with the intent of sending copies to families, "but it never came to the closing point." However, he thought that the Council might try it again this year as a way to finish the campaign.

### **Finance - FOS Not Reaching Families**

Steve asked Leslie to tell about an FOS talk that Barry Messner made to parents during last week's Weboree, where Barry explained why it's important for Cub packs to schedule presentations. When Barry asked how many knew what FOS was, only three parents raised their hands. Steve pointed out that the Weboree is for 4th graders, which means that these parents were typically involved with the program for 3-4 years, and yet they had never heard of FOS. In response to Biff's question, Steve said that the \$80 Barry raised will be credited toward the TRD campaign.

### **Finance - Organizing FOS Presentations and Follow-up**

Steve was pleased that over 100 FOS presentations were scheduled for this year versus only 52 last year, but he also described the huge amount of work, still ongoing, needed to organize them. He said that he, Joel Lieberman, Oliris Ramos, and Biff have to "juggle 106 presentations... We have dates, we don't have dates, we send e-mails, we phone people, people don't call back, who's the presenter..." Steve said that we will soon need follow-up phone calls and letters and proposed a "stuff the envelopes" pizza party.

Biff said that he had 90% success in setting presentation dates by contacting people exclusively by their cell phones, saying, "I don't ask if they want a presentation, instead I ask when we can make a presentation."

Biff then floated an idea that was quickly shot down about how to count presentations. He noted that when someone pledges \$X to FOS, that amount is counted whether or not the money is ever sent in. Biff proposed that, when a Scoutmaster pledges to schedule a presentation, that too should be counted whether or not the presentation actually takes place. Steve responded, "That ain't gonna work. Veto!"

Gerry Beatty asked everyone to acknowledge the work that Biff was doing and added her personal appreciation to Biff for a thank-you note he sent to her. After the applause, Pat

joked that he was offended that Biff had never sent him a note "for all the havoc that you caused me." Pat continued his mock-complaint by saying that he had planned to attend the Council's Sports Dinner when "Biff sent me off to make an FOS presentation instead!"

#### **Finance - Community FOS via the Ad Journal/Calendar**

Steve said, "We got a real shot in the arm" for the Community campaign by selling some \$5,000 in ads that will appear in the Council's event calendar, mentioning Inserra/ShopRite and Campmor as examples. Steve also told how he landed an ad from Wild Birds Unlimited, where the owner is an Eagle Scout.

Pat asked for a show of hands if the District should also take out an ad, and then collected money from those present to pay for it. Pat proposed a business card ad, but Biff wanted to buy something bigger. Bob suggested, "From the friends of Three Rivers," and Pat suggested adding "The Heckawee legend lives!"

#### **Finance - Community FOS via the TRD Golf Outing in October**

In response to Gerry's question, Steve said that the District Golf Outing will take place, but "it's not yet up and rolling." There was some conversation about who will assist Dave Wolf in organizing the event, with Bud Heymann and Norman Guerra mentioned.

#### **Finance - Community FOS via the "Reach Out" Program**

Pat recalled a successful "Reach Out" dinner that occurred in Jersey City a year and a half ago and said that he will meet next week with Norman Guerra to plan the next one. He said, "We should have a date shortly." Steve said that Harris Reinstein is willing to host a cocktail hour at his home in Ridgewood in northern Bergen County.

#### **Activities - Weboree (Apr 26-28)**

About the Weboree, Steve said that there were 602 participants and 180 worked as staff. Leslie said, "The Weboree was very good this year, but two things happened." She said that long-time event chair George Davis announced that he will step down to be replaced by Eric Dlugosz and Alan Bookspan as co-chairs.

The second thing is that a decision is needed for the date and location of the 2014 Weboree, due to scheduled work by PS&G on the power line that crosses the camp. Because No-Be-Bo-Sco is slated to be closed through May, the April Weboree will be affected, but Leslie had heard that work may be sped up and completed much earlier due to its impact on the nearby communities. Also, postponing the Weboree until June was being considered. Leslie said that going to some other camp might be out of the question simply due to the need for a huge parking lot, saying, "Barry counted 312 cars in the lot on Saturday afternoon."

Leslie told about a request from the Hudson Valley Council to run a joint Weboree in 2014 in order to give that other council enough on-the-job training to allow them to run their own event in 2015. But she and Steve were both adamant that our Weboree should

be run in one of our own Council camps, since a major purpose of the event is to introduce Cubs to our Boy Scout camp. Steve called it a "win-win" that gets Webelos excited about joining the Boy Scouts and going to camp, especially going to No-Be, and "it always runs cash positive."

#### **Activities - District Rocket Launch (May 5)**

Ken said that the Rocket Launch will take place on Sunday 2:00-4:00 PM, with a hour for packs to build their rockets, and an hour to launch them. He said that the instructions are to bring one bottle per den and to build the rocket as a group, but that is rarely the case. Ken said that last year there were 90 participants, but 118 rockets were launched. For this year, he said that 60 had sent him e-mails, which he predicted would translate into about 100 actually attending. Ken invited Scouters to join him and participate by walking around and giving ideas and advice, such as "Don't cut the bottom of the bottle." Ken said that two bottles, probably juice bottles, had exploded during the Weboree, resulting in all the Cubs hoping for more explosions.

#### **Activities - Fishing Derby (Jun 15?)**

Gerry said that the calendar shows the Fishing Derby on June 15, but she was worried because her usual contact at the Water Company had not returned any calls, saying "Hopefully she's been away on a 2-week vacation. Tomorrow I'll call the main switchboard to find out what's going on."

#### **Activities - Thank-You's for Two Past Events**

Leslie thanked the organizers and staff of the April 6 Pirate Quest for a good event, and the organizers and speakers at the April 14 District Awards Dinner, singling out Ed Quinn, Biff Van Kleef, Bill Severino, Rich Curran, and M.C. Barry Goldman.

#### **Activities - Council Recognition Dinner (May 13)**

Leslie urged people to sign up to attend the Council Recognition Dinner, when Pat and Ken (here tonight) will receive Silver Beaver awards along with Alan Bookspan. There was discussion about how to ensure we can all sit at the same table, and Bob Lilley said he will try to arrange it.

#### **Activities - Autumn Train Ride**

Ed Quinn said he belongs to a historical society that runs train rides down the Delaware River, and suggested that we can organize a ride for Cubs as a fund-raiser, saying that he can arrange for Scouts to pay half the price printed on the brochure. He said that the Minsi Trails Council schedules a trip every year with over 1,000 participants. Ed said that the trip starts from Phillipsburg and ends at a huge corn maze with a stop at a gemstone mine. Ed warned that the pumpkin patch described in the brochure won't be possible given the steep Scout discount.

Ed recalled that last year people signed up on their own for arbitrary dates "and we had no control over the event." Ken advised selecting a specific ride on a specific date and then promoting it as soon as possible. Leslie asked Ed for a copy of the brochure and said she

will present it to the Council Activities Committee. Ed asked her not to forget that Scouts can get a half-price discount.

### **Activities - 2013-14 Draft Calendar**

Bill Metts passed around copies of his draft calendar for 2013-14 and described the steps he took to create it: holidays, "steady" meetings for the District Committee, Roundtables, and Commissioners, and finally District events. As many entries as possible were vetted in advance by event chairs. The handout was both in list form and a graphic "that can be posted on a refrigerator." Bill noted that his calendar specifically omits Council events (Weboree, Pow Wow, Recognition Dinner, etc.) and training sessions.

Bill's first question was how to handle the June Roundtable/barbecue, which was combined last year with a District program launch. The decision was to continue the barbecue, but to drop our launch in favor of one being done this year by the Council. Bill pointed out that the Council's launch is 8 days earlier than our Roundtable (June 3 versus June 11), which means that event chairs will have less time to prepare flyers, etc.

Bill pointed out that the 2013 District Camporee has the unusual date span of Sat-Sun-Mon (October 12-14), where Monday is the Columbus Day holiday. He said the dates were chosen to accommodate Jewish Scouts who requested at least one District event centered on Sunday instead of Saturday. The Camporee Chair will be Daniel Chazin of Teaneck Troop 226, who will also have to decide on a location other than No-Be, which will be closed in October.

A recent addition to the calendar was a STEM weekend (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) to be run by Gordon Beattie. Bill said that he and Gordon decided on Nov 9-10, thus avoiding a conflict with both the Council Pow Wow and the District Merit Badge Fair.

Leslie addressed a prior complaint that the District schedules too many events by saying, "I think this is fine," and noted that some are just for Boy Scouts, some are just for Cubs, and some are for both. She called it a "nicely rounded-out calendar with just the right number of events."

Bill asked whether or not to retain a District Spring Camporee set for May 16-18 2014. After a lengthy discussion, a vote was taken with the decision to postpone it to 2015, most likely in May. The discussion involved the uncertain date of the 2014 Weboree, the best time for a Webelos World Conservation Weekend (September or June or April), and the State Police Camporee in May. There was additional discussion about the wisdom of placing an event on the calendar when its date is not certain or even if the event itself is not certain.

Leslie concluded the discussion by saying to Bill, "I can't thank you enough. This was an incredible feat. I don't know who would do this if you didn't."

### **Training - Some Past and Future Sessions**

Warren said that 15 Cub leaders attended his District BALOO course, including a leader from Jersey City. He added that the Harrington Park location will be available for future use. On the other hand, the Council does not yet have a location for the upcoming November Pow Wow, and Warren asked if anyone had a suggestion, saying we "lost our connection" to the Westwood Regional High School and to William Paterson University. Gerry thought that the high school in Allendale might work, and Biff suggested the Vo-Tech in Passaic County. Warren said he will pass both suggestions on to Council Training Chair Robin Caiazzo.

In response to Jim Wrynn's question, Warren said that the Council will run another BALOO course on June 1, and then told how the syllabus was altered so the session can be run on a single day either by a council or a district.

Warren said that "it's 99% sure" that the Council will not run a Wood Badge course in 2014, citing both the Council Camporee and the "challenge to get enough people to attend the last two courses."

### **Training - Calendar Needed**

Ken asked Warren about publishing a training calendar for 2013-14, saying, "It's what a lot of the leaders are asking for, especially Cub leaders." Warren explained the problem: "It needs the people willing to do the training to give me dates. If I put a date down in the calendar and then I can't get people to do the training, I'm stuck!" He offered to publish any sessions where a trainer can commit to, naming Biff and Ken Dutcher as people who had done so in the past. In response to Leslie's request, Warren said he will try to come up with something to hand out at the District barbecue, but he was not at all certain.

However, Warren had an alternate proposal for Ken, which he called "community-based training." He said that he is currently trying to set something up for Pack 4 in Ridgefield Park where a trainer will go there for a BALOO session. Ken responded, "If we're willing to go out to units, we need something to hand out to them that says, 'Call this person.'" Warren agreed and said he will prepare something.

### **Training - Two Outdoor Skills Sessions Canceled (were May 3-5)**

Warren explained the decision to cancel the twin OWLS/IOLS sessions that were supposed to take place at Camp Lewis over the weekend of May 3-5 (outdoor skills for Webelos leaders and Scout leaders, respectively). Warren said that these sessions normally take place in October and April, but confusion within the Council Training Committee caused the April session to be postponed to May, which turned out to be a bad choice. Trainers who might have signed up were already committed to either an OA weekend or the two Wood Badge weekends. He said, "They had plenty of participation but no staff. Everyone knows that the Council Training Committee is rebuilding."

### **Training - An Update from National**

Warren said that National had "backed off" from mandating that all contact leaders receive more than Youth Protection; that is, they should also attend position-specific and outdoor skills training. Warren's opinion was that NNJC should make it mandatory anyway and cited the success of another council he knew of. However, he pointed out that such a mandate requires knowing precisely which leaders meet the requirement and which don't, which he called a "data problem." He said, "I've done data correction programs at work. You need a very rigorous process in place to do it."

### **Training - NYLT (National Youth Leadership Training in Aug)**

Warren said, "The registration is up, but I don't know what the numbers are." He said that the feedback from units whose boys attended say that "it's worth paying for. Most units pay for their kids to go." Warren offered to arrange for a unit promotion, suggesting that a Scoutmaster should contact either Mike Wenson or himself.

### **Order of the Arrow Status**

Warren was happy to report that "our OA chapter is doing quite well," saying that 32% of our Scout units had requested an election (up from 20% last year), but he felt that more unit involvement was needed. Warren told of an Eagle Court of Honor he attended where as many as 10 Scouts were wearing a sash, but those Scouts never seemed to show up at an OA function. His opinion was, "If the units get involved, then the kids will get involved."

## **District Committee Meeting**

### **Attendance**

Gerry Beatty

Greg Boyle

Mike Carp

Rich Curran

Warren Dressler

Ken Hesse

Norman Kasser

Steve Leonardi

Bob Lilley

Eric Makar

Bill Metts

Ed Quinn

Leslie Sonkin

Patrick Stamato

Biff Van Kleef

James Wrynn