

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

**Key People**

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

**Opening**

Sal passed around the agenda with attachments and then asked Bob Lilley to lead the Pledge of Allegiance. Sal then thanked Bob for filling in District Commissioner during Sal's recovery, saying, "Thanks for stepping in, and I appreciate everything you did. It's too bad we don't have more people like you willing to take over at the drop of a hat. Much appreciated."

**Membership - Application Forms not Coming In**

Joel said he will fill in tonight for Membership Chair Eric Makar and directed attention to the membership tracking handout, dated Oct 15, and showing a Council total of 13,538 youth. Joel said that the total of active boys was actually much higher, but as many as 21 units had simply not turned in application forms for boys they recruited, possibly as many as 750. He gave an example of one unit that recruited 17 boys but was only able to get the parents of 8 to fill out a form.

Ken Dutcher reminded Norman Kasser that he and Steve were willing to use their homes as drop boxes for application forms. Norman said that he had made a broadcast saying that people are willing to drive directly to a home or office for a pick-up, and Steve verified that a few people had responded. Norman said that he will shortly make a second broadcast that repeats the pick-up offer and also adds Ken's and Steve's addresses.

**Membership - New Units**

Joel said that several new Cub packs are "in the works," and named Fort Lee, Jersey City, and Union City as three. He also praised a fall recruitment drive by Jersey City Pack 477 that raised their number from 42 to 93. In response to Norman's question, Joel said that that District Exec Oliris Ramos and new Assistant District Commissioner Tom Gingerelli were working with the pack to recruit adult volunteers. In response to Sal's question, Joel said that Dennis Ng is working with the new pack in Fort Lee to which Sal offered to help, since he lives in the area.

**Membership - Membership Summit (Nov 16)**

Joel said that the purpose of the upcoming Membership Summit at the Council office will be "to strategize where we'll go in 2014."

### **Membership - Membership Committee Training (Nov 12)**

Joel said that Dr. Jeffrey Zoeller will conduct a session on Membership Committee best practices for Eric Makar, Trish Songzoni, Henry Hahn, and Tom Gingerelli. Joel pointed out that we often form committees and ask people to serve on them, but give them little formal training or guidance. The upcoming session "Will give them a blow-by-blow of what's expected from their committee and what they're empowered to do."

### **Membership - Still Waiting for Application Forms**

Joel said "where we fall down on the job" is not recruiting kids, but rather in getting their application forms filled out and submitted to the Council office.

### **Membership - District Chairman's Club**

Joel verified that everyone present had seen his e-mail broadcast about the new "District Chairman's Club." He said, "Eric and Pat [Stamato] came up with this incentive for boys who go out in November and December and recruit a friend or two." The incentive is a "nice patch" along with their names in a drawing for a \$25 gift card.

### **Membership - Birthday Party-Style Invitations**

Joel said that his e-mail also contained a clever suggestion from Dr. Zoeller about how to get around school board restrictions on recruiting flyers, since schools rarely restrict invitations. Joel said, "He's right. Kids like to be invited to parties." He proposed a pizza party to "Get them into the door so they can hear our message."

### **Finance - Dave Wolf as New Friends of Scouting (FOS) Finance Chair**

Dave said, "I'm really excited to take over this position. I know that the two things that run Scouting are membership and money, and I'm going to try to help with the money side." Dave made these points:

- Dave referred to a handout that showed Family FOS had reached 96% of its 2013 goal, Community FOS was at 34%, and Leadership FOS had exceeded its goal with 116%. All three together came to 86% with two months to go.
- Dave said he attended a Finance meeting with his counterparts from the other two districts where they discussed FOS plans for 2014, and agreed to new goals higher than 2013, saying, "With inflation, our goals go up every year." But he added that with new incentives and the help of Rick Garland (see below) "I don't see a problem with reaching our goals."
- Dave said that Bob Lilley will be in charge of Leadership FOS, Biff Van Kleef in charge of Family FOS, and Pat Stamato in charge of Community FOS. He said that earlier discussions with Pat and other members of his committee left him optimistic that the Community goal could be reached.
- Dave specifically omitted money raised at the September golf outing as part of the Community FOS drive. Instead it falls under "special projects."

- The next Finance Committee meeting is scheduled to start just prior to the Commissioners meeting on Wednesday ("I'll provide refreshments").
- Dave said that he recently played golf with some potential donors "with deep pockets." One of them agreed to run a get-together with friends.
- Dave had two incentives. One was the 12th in a series of FOS council strips embroidered with "Reverent." The other was a fold-up cloth frisbee that came in a small pouch. Referring to the prior fragile giveaways, Dave joked, "No flashlights this time."
- Dave passed around samples of new FOS flyers, one for Family and one for Community.
- Dave said that we need more Family FOS presentations, having reached only 96 units, or a little over "50% penetration." He thanked Biff for helping us get to 50% in contrast to the other districts that were closer to 30%. He said, "All we ask from the units is an opportunity to show up and ask."
- Dave said that the Council is trying a new fund-raising program called the "Pacesetter Gift Reception," where a person friendly to Scouting will invite five friends to his home and ask them both for a donation and also to return home to invite five of their own friends. Dave called them "small intimate gatherings" intended to build a network of givers; and he also credited Rick Garland with the idea. Dave said that he had already volunteered to host one such reception.
- Dave said that he is always open to suggestions and will be happy to work with anyone who wants to volunteer.

### **Finance - Steve's Report**

Steve made these points:

- Steve said that a new "FOS Finance Steering Committee" had been established with three members now and possibly four more later. Steve described its function by comparing it to our Nominating Committee, saying that it will help "identify people, needs, and resources."
- Steve echoed Dave's optimism about reaching 100% of the Family FOS goal, saying "We're too close to miss it." He said that there are 20 "good solid units" in the District that had no presentation this year.
- Steve said that a Council-sponsored training session for FOS presenters will take place on Nov 21, and that a prior posting of Nov 19 was in error. He said that a second TRD-sponsored session will take place next month, possibly in conjunction with the December Roundtable.
- Steve spoke a bit about Rick Garland, the Council's new Director of Development, speaking from first-hand knowledge. Steve called Garland "One of the most skilled Development Directors that I know," and said that NNJC was very fortunate to have him on the Board.

### **Finance - Resource Catalog for 2014**

Steve said that the DEs plan to prepare another issue of the Calendar for 2014, with the profits once again being credited to the Community FOS campaign, which he called "the toughest [FOS] nut to crack" He opened his copy of the 2013 calendar to the centerfold double page ad from Inserra ShopRite, which Dave Wolf had arranged. Steve's recollection was that everything was in place to publish around June for calendars going from September 2013 through December 2014.

In response to Warren Dressler's question, Steve explained how the ads were gathered using a "kind of sales sheet" that various Committee members used to solicit responses. Some members also supplied leads for the DEs to follow. There was also an ad for the Three Rivers District, although no money came into the campaign.

### **Finance - Popcorn**

Joel reminded everyone that popcorn orders must be entered into the Trails-End online system during the upcoming weekend. He urged members to pass on his reminder to any unit leaders they happen to come across.

### **Advancement - Cooking Merit Badge**

Ken expressed his worry that many Eagle candidates who will turn 18 in January or February are not aware that Cooking will become a required merit badge on January 1, 2014, leaving them little time to earn it. He wanted to avoid "sweaty palms" by sending a warning broadcast to Scoutmasters. Ken said he had not seen the new requirements but was told that there will be "extensive changes." Norman offered to draft a broadcast for Ken's approval.

### **Advancement - Lots of Eagle Boards this Month**

Ken said "We have a bunch of boys coming back from college, so the Thanksgiving break will be full of Eagle Boards of Review." He explained that these boys had already turned 18 and therefore had to schedule an Eagle Board within the 90-day grace period. Ken said that he already has Boards scheduled for the Wednesday before Thanksgiving and the Saturday and Sunday after, and that Ed Ference also has a couple.

Ken said that he currently does not have a count of new Eagle Scouts but promised to have it by the December Committee meeting. Paul Adams said that he recently sat on two Boards and announced that any boy who makes Eagle Scout by the first week in December will receive an invitation to the January 9 recognition dinner.

### **Rechartering Packets**

Steve said that he will set up a table at the November Roundtable where rechartering packets will be handed out, but people are needed to man the table. He got several volunteers.

Bob Lilley said that he will set up a drop-off station in Oradell on December 3 for any unit that has completed its rechartering paperwork.

### **Membership Training for Assistant District Commissioners (ADCs)**

Bob said that Dr. Geoffrey Zoeller will conduct a training session in Oradell on Nov 13 for ADCs. The subject will be how to save failing units and how to start new units. Bob said that Zoeller had picked up a lot of good information at Philmont.

### **Council-Wide Camporee in 2014**

Bob said that our Council has already begun planning for a Camporee on Oct 10-12, 2014 that will take place at Camp Alpine, the one owned by the Greater New York Councils. The planners need "five key people" from TRD to volunteer as Chairman, First Aid, Registration, Awards, and Vendors.

### **Reregistering District Scouters and Fee Increase for 2014**

Bob said that he wants to get all District Scouters reregistered by January. A Scouter associated with a unit and registered with that unit should simply tell Bob, but "non-unit" Scouters, such as District members-at-large and District Chairs, should submit a form and pay the \$29 fee. Bill Metts verified that Unit Commissioners should specify their own home unit as primary and TRD as secondary. About January, Bob said, "We tell our units to recharter on time, and our district should do the same. I don't want to take 9 months to get things straightened out." He said he will give a receipt to anyone who pays their fee in cash.

Steve verified that the 2014 registration fee for each youth and adult will be \$29 (\$24 + \$5), up from \$20 (\$15 + \$5). He said that National decided to raise their fee from \$15 to \$24, but NNJC was able to retain its insurance surcharge at \$5 thanks to a successful FOS campaign.

### **Leadership FOS in 2014**

Bob asked TRD members to make their contributions to the Leadership FOS campaign as soon as possible, saying that he wants to wrap things up by March. He joked, "I don't want to go to these meetings and say that I'm working on it."

### **Camping Committee - Is It Active?**

In response to Joel's concern, Leslie said that Tristan Vidreiro and Barry Messner have been attending Camping Committee meetings at the Council office. However, she verified that TRD does not have an official Camping Chair.

Steve was uncomfortable with the situation, saying, "It's more than just reporting [on the Council meetings]," and named camp promotions as one of the additional tasks. Leslie named some people who often step in on an ad-hoc basis, such as Matt Dalzell. There followed some discussion about how to form a Camping Committee and who might be a suitable chair, but no decision was reached.

Steve said, "We need a plan to get presentations out to the units," and added that each unit's committee should also have someone dedicated to camping. It occurred to Steve that we also have no feel for which units attend which camps.

### **Training - Pow Wow Sessions (Nov 2)**

Warren said that about 50 people attended, adding that the biggest problem was finding a location. He said that the organizers are hoping to conduct the next one in the spring, which means skipping 2014 and doing it in 2015. Warren said, "For some reason there was no connection between the Pow Wow Committee and our District," with the result that TRD's trainers were added at the last-minute, such as Ken Hesse and Dennis Ng, and missing Leslie Sonkin altogether. He said that Dennis' session for Den Chiefs was really well attended (over 20 Scouts) and hoped that Dennis might be able to schedule more of them for TRD in the future, saying, "There should be more demand for it." Warren also mentioned upcoming sessions for BALOO and Trainer's EDGE.

### **Training - New Online Tool for the Training Committee**

Warren said that members of the Council Training Committee will soon be given access to a new tool launched from the "MyScouting.org" website that will report on units and show which do not have trained leaders. But Warren allowed that the report will surely be plagued by bad data, which means that a first step (hopefully conducted by Unit Commissioners) will be to supply missing information.

At the start, access to the site will be restricted to the "Key-3," with the expectation that access will eventually be "pushed down" to other members of the Training Committee, so that Council Registrar Tyrone Manning will not be the only person who can update the database. Warren said that the system will also allow all the people who take a course to be updated at the same time instead of doing it one Scouter at a time; all will get updated and all will receive certificates.

### **Training - Leader-Specific for Cub and Scout Leaders**

Warren said that Cub Leader-Specific training is now available online, but he intends to schedule live sessions anyway, causing Leslie to remark, "Sooner rather than later." Warren thinks that Cub leader training "works best at the unit level," while Boy Scout leader training "works best at a larger level." Now that the Pow Wow is over, Ken said that he intends to schedule a session for Scout leaders in early December at the Scout Museum in Rochelle Park. Warren offered to post the event on the Council training calendar just as soon as Ken is firm and told Ken that he will have advance access to the list of attendees. In response to Leslie's question, Ken said that he is willing to run a second session in January if the Museum turns out to be too small to accommodate all the Scouters who want to sign up.

Norman asked Warren to step through the process of scheduling Cub leader training at the unit level. Warren asked for advance notice, saying, "First tell me that you're working on setting something up and I'll find someone to do the training. I have a half dozen

people I can draw on. Then the two of you can settle on a date." Warren said that he had used this technique successfully for a BALOO session in Harrington Park.

### **Training - Two More Offerings**

Warren said that planning for an NYLT (National Youth Leadership Training) session is underway and that he expects registrations to reach capacity as it did in the prior session. Also, the Council will offer to come to a Scout troop to present an indoor ILST course (Introductory Leadership Skills for Troops).

### **Activities - Gold Rush (Oct 26)**

Mark Wrightington said that 11 packs came with some 72 participants and "it worked well." Mark said that four Boy Scout troops showed up to help: T17, T138, T213, and T379.

### **Activities - Upcoming STEM Weekend (Nov 8-10)**

Mark said that the current registration shows four units coming with 41 participants, both Scouts and Webelos, but more may sign up.

### **Activities - Upcoming Merit Badge Fair (Nov 23)**

Mark said that event organizer Gerry Beatty "Provides the location and the counselors, but it's up to the individual Scouts to make plans and to schedule time with the counselors." Leslie remarked, "It's a great event." Warren said that Dennis Ng had considered running a Den Chief training session at the same time, but decided against it.

### **Activities - Upcoming Bowl-a-Thon (Dec 27)**

Mark said that the District Bowl-a-Thon will take place on Dec 27 at three separate locations. In response to Leslie's question, he said that two volunteers will be needed at each location mainly to handle registration. Leslie and Sal said they will help.

### **Activities - Upcoming Tiger Tumble (Jan 18)**

About the Tiger Tumble, Mark said that past attendance has been 70-80, but he thought he could get as many as 150 if he could obtain an e-mail list of just the registered Tigers using what he called "direct marketing."

Mark referred to one of tonight's handouts that showed TRD with 195 Tigers. Joel said, "195 sounds like a big number, but it's really pathetic when you consider that we serve Bergen and Hudson Counties." He contrasted that with sign-ups by the Little League. Leslie proposed having the Tiger Tumble double as a "recruitment vehicle" with "bring a friend." Mark liked the idea but asked for advance registration in order to ensure that there will be enough doughnuts at the "Donut Eating" station.

### **Activities - Upcoming Klondike Derby (Jan 25)**

Leslie passed on a message from event organizer Allen Sterk that he needs volunteers to assist as mayors and helpers and "everything else."

### **Commissioners College (Oct 19)**

Sal said that the Commissioners College had a light turnout, but Leslie and Maria Nigro did a "bang-up job" with their presentations.

### **Call for Unit Commissioners**

Sal said that Dr. Phil Mollica mailed a letter to all unit Committee Chairs requesting each to designate someone to sign up as a Unit Commissioner. Sal was not happy with the way the letter was worded, saying that "People are reacting quickly to the letter without actually reading it." Bob agreed, saying that, in Sal's absence, the letter went out over his signature, and so all the negative responses were e-mailed to him. Bob said one unit responded well and gave him the name of a Scouter to contact, but others were under the mistaken impression that their current Unit Commissioner would be replaced, or that someone was to be designated to take over their job.

Sal explained the true intent of the letter, which was to gather volunteers for a kind of "precursor to a Commissioner" job. He thought a better title might be "Local Coordinator" or "Unit Coordinator." He said, "We'd like someone from the unit to let the ADCs know what's going on with the unit and if the unit needs any help." Sal explained that the Council's plan is to "ship Commissioners from units that are functioning well to cover instead units where they're needed more."

Bob thought it was a mistake to do a mass mailing of the letter rather than send them to just the high-functioning units. He said the purpose was to "open up lines of communication," so that every unit has someone talking to the ADCs.

### **DEs Will Focus on Membership**

Steve said that he, Joel, and Oliris will spend the rest of 2013 working on either new units or "SR" (separated and reregistered) units, 8 and 7 respectively. In fact one of the "SR" units is well on the way. He said "We've been working on these 15 for months, and we're very close to all of them coming together." Steve's reminder was that membership is "pretty much the reason we're all here." He said "We'll be talking with the Unit Commissioners and the ADCs for support for the new units. Pretty much someone has stepped up for each one to help them get through their short-term challenges."

About the "SR" units, Bob said that Dr. Zoeller's presentation will have a lot to say about them. Eric Dlugolz proposed a congratulatory message to the SRs, such as "Good going and welcome to the fold!"

**District Committee Meeting  
November 7, 2013**

**Attendance**

Paul Adams

Sal Bellomo

Eric Dlugosz

Warren Dressler

Ken Dutcher

Norman Kasser

Steve Leonardi

Joel Lieberman

Bob Lilley

Bill Metts

Leslie Sonkin

Dave Wolf

Mark Wrightington