

**District Committee Meeting  
December 5, 2013  
One Bergen County Plaza  
Hackensack, NJ,**

**Key People**

Pat Stamato, District Chair  
Sal Bellomo, District Commissioner  
Leslie Sonkin, District Vice Chair for Program  
Steve Leonardi, District Field Director  
See attachment for other attendees

**Opening**

Biff Van Kleef called for a moment of silence for Scouters either ill or recently deceased. He then led the Pledge followed by the Boy Scout Oath, pointing out that Venturers will shortly convert from a full-hand sign and salute to Boy Scout 3-finger style.

**Membership - Short of the 2013 goal**

Sal referred to the Membership page of tonight's agenda, pointing out that we are only 359 Cub Scouts short of the December 31 goal we set for ourselves. Sal was certain that a large portion of the gap was due to application forms not yet turned in and told his Assistant District Commissioners (ADCs) to "start making phone calls."

Bob Lilley told about a problem with registration fees he ran into. A unit attached \$20 to an application forms, which is wrong for 2013 (should be a pro-rated fee of \$5) and for 2014 (full year fee will be \$29). Steve thought the problem could be easily handled by depositing the 2013 excess into the unit's account kept at the Council office. Instead, Bob said that the unit leader decided to work directly with Council Registrar Tyrone Manning to straighten things out.

Sal said that there are 8 new units in the works, one now fully registered, and another very close. He called for help, saying that he needs Unit Commissioners willing to "baby-sit" both the new units and the ones "barely hanging on." He said that Jim Africano has already volunteered to do so.

Norman Kasser said he will broadcast a third "turn in your apps" message, and Steve said that the prior broadcasts actually resulted in a few applications dropped off at his home. Steve estimated about 140 applications still outstanding. He thought we still have a chance to reach our Cub Scout goal given the 140 plus the new Cubs that will come in with the 8 new units, all targeted to sign up before year's end. He mused, "If our 110 existing packs each signed up one more boy..." Although Boy Scout numbers are also short of the goal, Steve was less concerned and said, "If we can get a plus number for Cubs, the Boy Scout numbers will work out in the long run."

Steve said, "I don't know if Eric Makar and his Membership Committee is engaged," and asked Pat to contact Eric.

Steve said that a "roster check" is in progress, where each unit will be asked to e-mail a copy of their roster to Joel Lieberman, who will then check if any youths are not in the database. Steve estimated that as many as 5 unregistered kids per unit might turn up. Dave Wolf guessed that some units are sitting on apps with the intention of submitting them along with their new charters in 2014, saying, "They don't want to deal with \$2 or \$3. They just want to submit the full \$29 in January."

Steve said that he will be happy to receive application forms scanned and e-mailed to him, just as long as there are sufficient funds in the unit account to cover the fee. He then told of a Scoutmaster who came to the Council office with an Eagle application for his son only to discover that the boy had not been registered for his first year as a Scout. Apparently the Scoutmaster bought awards at the New York Scout Shop so the discrepancy was not detected.

### **Finance - About the Committee**

Finance Committee Chair Dave Wolf said that his committee had met twice, most recently in the hour just prior to tonight's meeting and said, "We have a good idea about how we're going to reach our goals." Dave started with a summary of 2013, saying that Family FOS and Community FOS are both short of their goals, while Leadership FOS exceeded its goal at 116%. He named the Scouters heading the three campaigns: Biff Van Kleef, Pat Stamato, and Bob Lilley, respectively.

### **Finance - Family FOS**

Biff said that a training session for Family FOS presenters will take place during the upcoming Roundtable, saying, "It's a new program and lots of things are different, so you have to be there." He said that the 2014 goal was set at \$85,000 (up from \$75,000), but that he and Steve think it's "manageable" if the goal of 120 presentations can be met. He asked the people present to give him the times, dates, and locations of presentations for any units they lead or are involved with, and to do so within two weeks. Dave repeated Biff's call for the training session and said, "If you know a presenter who was not at the Council-level meeting, bring him along."

### **Finance - Community FOS**

Pat said that a new folder had been prepared, and that he will test it out with potential donors in the Jersey City area: "Lawyers, engineers, and professionals I've been dealing with."

Also new is Dave's request to all the district leaders to "take ownership" of the Community campaign by sending the new folder and a cover letter to "businesses and contacts you have in your own communities."

### **Finance - Leadership FOS**

Bob handed to each person present an envelope with a pledge card and a cover letter and asked people to start by reading the letter. He said that he had already received two donations that started off the 2014 campaign with \$600 towards its goal of \$15,000. He said that he expects 100% participation from the district's leaders, with any excess over the goal to be turned over to the Community or Family campaigns. Bob concluded, "As leaders, we should set the example. Also, I want to close out the campaign in February."

Dave noted that most of the people here are leaders both with the district and with their own units. He said, "If you used to donate through your unit, please change that and donate through our Leadership campaign." He explained that we have lots of units and families that should be enough to meet the Family FOS campaign, whereas "there are only a finite number of leaders." Mark Wrightington disagreed, saying that he typically sets the example at his unit's Family FOS presentations by handing over the first check in order to "get the ball rolling." Bob suggested that Mark simply turn in a pledge card with \$0 along with a note saying that he already gave to the Leadership campaign. Bob added that he never publishes a list of who gave and how much, saying, "It's nobody's business how much you gave."

### **Finance - Popcorn sale**

Dave said that the 2013 popcorn sale raised \$318,000, which was far short of our goal of \$400,000. Also, 2013 was down compared to last year's \$325,000. Looking ahead to improvement in 2014, Steve proposed a meeting of "people who really know popcorn for a brainstorming session."

### **Registering District Committee members**

Bob said that he wants to complete registration of District Committee members by January 15, saying, "Either give me \$29 payable to the Council, or give me the unit number that will have your primary registration." He said that the District has to recharter by the end of January and asked, "How can we scream at a unit for not getting their charter in on time, when our district charter is 7 or 8 months late?" Bob clarified that his concern is district members-at-large and Unit Commissioners who may not be directly affiliated with a unit. He also stressed that each person only pays one time no matter how many positions they hold and joked, "That's the nice thing about Scouts. They don't rip you off."

### **Advancement - Eagle Boards in 2013**

Ed Ference urged unit leaders to schedule Eagle Boards prior to Christmas, saying, "I don't want to do a Board on New Year's Eve for some boy who doesn't want to do the Cooking merit badge." Ken Dutcher understood that Ed was half-joking and clarified the December 31 deadline by saying, "What has to be completed by then are the project, the 1-page Eagle Application form, and the Scoutmaster conference." If those conditions are met, an Eagle Board may be scheduled any time within 30 days of the 18th birthday. If those conditions aren't met by December 31, then Cooking will be added as a required

merit badge. Ken said, "I don't know what the new requirements for Cooking will be, but my understanding is that they were greatly expanded."

Ken said that the people in his area of the Advancement Committee are "maxed out" with 11 Boards scheduled between now and the holidays, so they have stopped accepting new requests. Ken assumed that Ed's people are similarly booked. Then he joked, "However, and extra donation to FOS might make a difference..." Pat asked if Ken was following Hudson County methods, to which Ken replied, "Pat, you've been an inspiration to us in more ways than one."

### **Program - Merit Badge Fair (Nov 23)**

Leslie said that she was reporting for Gerry Beatty, who is not feeling well. She said that the Merit Badge Fair was well attended but did not have numbers. Bob said that there were not a lot of Three Rivers Scouts, but there were a lot of participants from out of Council, including an entire troop from Rockland County (?) who camped at Alpine and attended the Fair in shifts.

Biff proposed charging a small fee for the Fair, such as \$5 in-Council and \$10 out-of-Council, but Steve was not comfortable using the Fair as a fund-raiser, pointing out that there are no costs involved.

### **Program - Bowl-a-Thon**

Mark said that this year's December 27 Bowl-a-Thon will be a repeat of last year's with three different locations (Union City, Elmwood Park, and Montvale) with staggered times that allow people to select a convenient time. Mark recalled that last year's attendance was about 260, but he hopes for more this year, saying that a Cubmaster contacted him to make sure that his entire pack of 50 kids plus friends would be welcome. Mark's response: "The more the merrier!" He said the early-bird fee is \$15 with \$20 if late or at the door, and it's open to anybody, whether Scouts, parents, leaders, or friends.

### **Side discussion about communications**

Biff was concerned that events like the Bowl-a-Thon are not being publicized sufficiently in advance; that is, with three months lead time. Mark and Leslie assured him that advance publicity does indeed take place but raised the question of who is on the e-mail list to receive broadcasts. Norman said that we have over 700 people on the list, but we don't know if every unit is represented. He said that he volunteered to run a cross-check, but that project requires starting with a dump of all district Scoutmasters, Cubmasters, Committee Chairs, and Chartered Org Reps in the Council's database, and that list was never provided.

Ed Quinn echoed Biff's concern about advance publicity and told of a "Polar Express" train ride organized by his club. He said that the December event had been publicized in July and had sold out quickly. Ed added that he offered to reserve an autumn train ride for members of the Three Rivers District as a fund-raiser, but it went nowhere.

### **Program - Tiger Tumble (Jan 18)**

Mark said that this is the 8th year for the Tiger Tumble, which is restricted to just first-year Tiger Cubs (but sometimes older kids sneak in), and there will be 8 stations. He said, "Palisades Park High School has kind of become our permanent home," and guessed attendance will be 70-80 kids. Leslie added, "This event is so much fun that it can renew your faith in Scouting." Mark said that a lot of the stations are now handled by Boy Scouts, except for the ones run by George Simoni and Jim Africano, "who won't give up running their stations."

### **"Pinewoods on the Road"**

Leslie said that January is when she and others take their Pinewood track and timer to Cub units without their own track, saying that 6 or 7 have already been scheduled. She said that a "new to us" pack in Hudson County with 100 kids is on the schedule, possibly in Secaucus. Leslie said, "Tell us if you know of a unit that we can assist. The fee this year is \$75, which basically pays for gas. Racemaster Ernie Sprance is the best." Leslie added that the District Pinewood will take place on March 15 but the location is not yet firm.

### **Program - District Klondike Derby (Jan 25)**

Ken Dutcher said that three Scoutmasters called him to complain that the Klondike Derby was not posted on the online calendar [*Editor's note: Posted for Jan 25 was a placeholder with the note, "details to be announced."*] Leslie said that event organizer Allen Sterk needs more volunteers for his staff, and several people said they will volunteer. Mark joked that we should give 10 bonus points to any unit that provides a staff member. Warren Dressler suggested asking for help from the OA Chapter, and Ken Hesse suggested that someone come to the Roundtables to promote the event.

### **Program - Weboree (Jun 6-8)**

Leslie said that a new date was chosen for the 2014 Weboree as the "first weekend in June," but corrected herself to "the first *full* weekend in June." Ken Hesse pointed out that the calendar now has two Webelos-oriented weekends in a row: his World Conservation weekend followed by the Weboree, saying, "It will kill one or the other," Leslie suggested, "How about building World Conservation into the Weboree?" Ken thought about it and then said, "No, World Conservation deals with advancement, whereas that's not what happens at a Weboree." He then proposed rescheduling to the end of April, taking up the weekend left open when the Weboree moved to June.

### **Program - STEM Weekend (Nov 8-10)**

Mark asked for feedback from anyone who attended the STEM weekend. Pat said, "It was very interesting and very challenging. The kids were really into it and did very well." Norman estimated 40 Scouts and Webelos. Leslie predicted that it will be a very popular event when done again next year, saying, "I thought it was terrific." Mark suggested that event organizer Gordon Beattie should put together a slide show for the Program Launch or a Roundtable. Leslie liked the idea of a slide show and proposed doing one at the June District picnic and volunteered to put it together if provided with some photos.

### **Side discussion - Dissolving the Central NJ Council**

Ed Quinn passed on the information that the Central NJ Council will dissolve at year's end, and was in the process of selling its summer camp properties at Yards Creek and Kittatinny Mountain. He said that Kittatinny had problems with its dam along with some other "maintenance" problems.

### **Camping - Report from the Council Camping Committee**

Barry Messner read from his notes taken at the last Council Camping Committee meeting:

- Charlie Shotmeyer is the Committee Chair and eleven people attended the prior meeting. Grey Rolland was present as the staff advisor.
- No-Be-Bo-Sco will be closed until June 1, after which it should reopen in time for the 2014 Weboree.
- Barry reported that Jim Patterson is experiencing personal problems in his family and proposed a card with good wishes from the district, saying, "The man is fantastic to work with."
- Barry said that some councils have tried implementing pistols at their ranges as a pilot program. Biff was familiar with it from when he attended Camp School, and said that it's very "labor intensive with one staff member for each shooter." He added that Patriots' Path Council is trying it out at Allamuchy.
- Barry said that Jamie Laga is looking into how we can set up a zip line in one of the camps. The estimated cost will be \$5,000 for a 250 foot run, but a benefactor was found willing to foot the cost.
- Barry said that the COPE course at Camp Lewis will open for Scout troops on March 16, adding that last year's sessions went well.
- Barry said that shooting sports are not expecting any problems with ammo.
- The Camping Committee turned down a request for Scouts to take their swim tests at pools out of camp.
- Remediation from storm damage from Hurricane Sandy stands at about 85%. Barry said that the Council received funds from USDA (Department of Agriculture), but he had no idea how they became involved.
- Barry said that all Camp Director positions have been filled "mostly by teachers."
- Barry was very impressed with the quality of this year's promotional flyers created by Mike Cowan.
- Leslie said that Tristan Vidreiro said he is willing to be the lead person for camp promotions and praised Matt Dalzell for promotions he had done at previous Cub events. Tom Molnar was pleased that camping flyers had been enclosed with the unit rechartering packets.

- Barry said that attendance at the summer camps was quite good with Lewis as the only exception. He said that No-Be is already sold out for 2014.
- Barry said that Camp Lewis is planning to do a STEM session during their last week for both Cubs and Scouts.

## **Training**

Warren Dressler made these points:

- Warren said that there will be an EDGE course on December 14 for anyone who now does training and "wants to bump up their training skills." He said that EDGE must be taken every three years as a refresher. Warren said that "it's a great course that focuses on training and evaluation skills," and then explained that evaluation skills are feedback on how well one has presented. Leslie remarked, "That's a gift."
- Warren said that he had just received a request from Barry Goldman to train his pack's new leaders, and Warren asked if anyone would volunteer to handle that task.
- Warren said that the annual Gilwell Brunch for Wood Badge graduates is scheduled for January 11 at the Paramus Elks, but the flyer is not yet ready.
- In response to Ken Hesse's question, Warren said that no session had been scheduled for training new Cub leaders other than the request from Goldman. Ken and Leslie both urged Warren to set up two as soon as possible, one after the holidays and one in the spring. Warren replied, "I will definitely do that."
- Warren said that a report is now available from "MyScouting.org" that tells which "contact-level leaders" are in need of training. For now, the report is accessible only to certain people but will eventually be "pushed down" so others can access it. The purpose is to let the Training Committee focus its efforts and to correct errors.
- Ken Dutcher said he plans to schedule two Scoutmaster-specific sessions, one just for Ed Ference's troop and the other open to everyone. The latter will take place in early January at the Montvale Community Center.
- In response to Leslie's question, Warren said that he does not have a formal Training Committee. Leslie suggested setting up a pool of people that Warren can draw on like the pool of FOS presenters that Biff can draw on. Warren replied that he is putting together a list of people that he plans to confer with via a teleconference meeting. He joked, "It will happen on the eighth day of the week."

## **Commissioners - Unit Commissioners needed**

Sal said that all three districts need more Unit Commissioners, but was unhappy about the way the Council Commissioner staff went about it. Sal said that a letter sent to all Committee Chairs was poorly worded and turned out to be counter-productive. He then gave a summary of what was intended, saying, "We want each of the strong units to

assign one adult to act as a liaison (not exactly a Unit Commissioner) who will report monthly to his ADC on his unit's status." He should also ensure that his own unit recharter on time, has a good growth plan, and has good relations with the District and Council.

Sal added that the way he understood the Council's intention was to have any strong unit with a good liaison person stand on its own. This would allow that unit's Unit Commissioner to be freed up in order to spend more time with weaker units.

### **District Director's Minute**

Steve told about a dual Eagle ceremony he attended in Tenafly, where both boys' speeches "gave accolades to their experience at the Klondike. They were so proud of that." Steve said, "Sometimes we get too encumbered with the process and with the administration, so it was nice to hear it."

Steve said that he was happy to see the contributions and pledges turned in tonight to the Leadership FOS Campaign, which will allow him to make a good report at the next staff meeting.

**District Committee Meeting  
December 5, 2013**

**Attendance**

Paul Adams

Sal Bellomo

Eric Dlugosz

Warren Dressler

Ken Dutcher

Ed Ference

Ken Hesse

Norman Kasser

Steve Leonardi

Bob Lilley

Barry Messner

Bill Metts

Tom Molnar

Lillian Molnar

Ed Quinn

Leslie Sonkin

Patrick Stamato

Biff Van Kleef

Dave Wolf

Mark Wrightington