

District Committee Meeting
April 3, 2014
One Bergen County Plaza
Hackensack, NJ,

Key People - District

Pat Stamato, District Chair
Barry Goldman, District Commissioner
Mark Wrightington, District Vice Chair for Program
Dave Wolf, District Vice Chair for Finance
Steve Leonardi, District Field Director
Joel Lieberman, Senior District Executive

Key People - Council

Steve Gray, Northern NJ Council Scout Executive
Joe Healy, Northern NJ Council President
Dr. Phil Mollica, Northern NJ Council Commissioner
See attachment for other attendees

Opening

Biff Van Kleef led the Pledge followed by the Boy Scout Law. Handouts were tonight's agenda, the District's Journey to Excellence dashboard for April, the Council's FOS report as of March 31, and the District's membership report as of March 31.

Membership Status

Joel Lieberman referred to the district membership handout showing 4036 youth compared to 4219 in March 2013. He said that a few units had not yet been renewed due to flawed paperwork or insufficient fees, and he guessed that four or five units will be dropped altogether. Joel praised the unit commissioners for work they had done with new units in Fort Lee, Bogota, and Union City, naming Barry Messner, Dennis Ng, Tom Molnar, Tom Gingerelli, and Sal Bellomo. He said, "Thank you for making these newer leaders feel more comfortable."

Council Status Report - Overview

Council President Joe Healy took the floor, thanked those present for work they have been doing, and made these points:

- Joe said that the Council achieved a bronze level Journey to Excellence (JTE) award "after years of making nothing." He also noted that Three Rivers had earned a silver.
- Joe thanked Scout Exec Steve Gray for "restoring credibility to the professional team" He also cited Pat Coviello for his contribution last year prior to transferring to another council.
- Joe recalled the "membership standards" polling and town hall meetings that took place prior to the execs' trip to Texas to vote on revising National's position on gay youth and gay adults, saying, "It was an opportunity for Scouting to have a

referendum on an important social issue." He said, "Whichever side you were on, we gave it a good, fair, full process -- it wasn't just pushed through."

- Joe said that selling the Rock Hill summer camp property to Pennsylvania's Green Acres brought in enough money to pay off all debts plus a nice addition to the Council's endowment fund. About the latter, Joe said that 2013 started with \$6.1 million, whereas the current balance is \$7.4 million. This caused a lot of joking about who was in charge of the investments, with Joe saying, "It wasn't me -- I'm not that brilliant."
- Joe said that every year about 5% is taken out of the fund and applied toward the Council's operating budget, thus he expects about \$300,000 this year, which will cover about 8-9% of the expenditures. Joe said that money will also be applied to much-needed improvements to the camp properties, especially No-Be-Bo-Sco.
- Joe said that FOS in 2014 had raised \$100,000 more than last year, but "nowhere near where it needs to be," with many units refusing to allow presentations. He pointed out that FOS gives parents "a way to support a program that's doing great work with their kids."
- Joe said that 3,600 Scouts attended camp last year.
- Joe talked about the Scoutreach program, and said that National promised to match whatever funds we can raise. He said that contacts were made to both traditional and non-traditional donors and that Rosa Urena had been hired to run the program. He said that over 300 kids had been signed up in 6 or 8 units. Because getting adult volunteers is so difficult, they have been asking for help from other civic organizations, such as police departments. Joe said, "It's just very hard because there's no [Scouting] culture, but these kids need it."
- Joe said that the Council's Eagle Scout program is very successful, with about 300 new Eagles last year (he didn't know how many of them came from TRD).
- Joe said that Cub recruiting was better than expected but was still worrisome, since the current count is 7,200, way down from the 9,000 we had in 2009-10. He was OK with the Boy Scout count of 5,000, which he called "pretty stable," but the reduction in Cubs will soon be reflected in Scout troop membership.
- Joe summarized what has to be done: Recruit Cubs, train the pack leadership, give the boys a good program leading to a desire to stay, get them into the Webelos program, get the Webelos camping with a Scout troop, and get a troop to work with each pack. He said, "That's the challenge we have, but it's really hard."

Council Status Report - Strategic Plan for 2014-15

Joe continued his report by talking about the Council's strategic plan, put together a few years back, saying that it was time to take a fresh look at it and take steps to implement it. As a result a new committee was formed co-chaired by John Hughes of Bayonne, and Dave Verbraska of Pfizer.

- Joe had an organization chart showing the plan's "7 pillars to build on," many of which are familiar tasks but with new names: Impact & Participation, Dynamic Programs, Innovation & Technology, Leadership Excellence, Financial Stewardship, Marketing & Communications, and Property Management. Each area is co-chaired by one professional and one volunteer with assistance from one of the Council's vice-presidents. Joe then gave some details about each area.
- Impact & Participation (like Membership & Retention) has Eric Chamberlin, Cliff Lindholm, Raul Arrazcaeta plus committee members.
- Dynamic Programs is concerned with both district events and council-wide events, such as camporees and jamborees and the upcoming camporee at Alpine. It also includes the Council's camping program. Joe named Grey Rolland, Dave Stuhr, and Walter Koroluk.
- Innovation & Technology will look at how we collect data, which is sometimes adequate and sometimes awful. He named Steve Leonardi, Fred Creswick (see below), and John Gonzo. Joe said, "We have great stuff, but we have to communicate it to people." He added that we have a need to "modernize" how we communicate to parents in their 30's and 40's who rely on social media, saying "We can send letters, but that's inefficient and also not the way that people want to communicate."
- Leadership Excellence has Steve Gray as its professional due to its importance, with assistance from Dr. Ken King and Mark Barnard. Joe said, "They know how to select board members, and they know the kind of training that our professionals will need."
- Financial Stewardship is headed by Rick Garland, who Joe described as a "professional fund-raiser who knows what he's doing and who has already made a difference." In addition to FOS being way ahead of a year ago, Rick is also working on special fund-raising events. Joe stressed that we must find new donors so as not to "wear out our welcome" with the old ones.
- Marketing & Communications is "a new thing for us" and is headed by Anthony Chirido. Joe said, "We've got to sell this great program of ours in ways that are meaningful." As an example, he said we should let communities know about some 57,000 hours of service that Scouts provided last year, as well as the 300 Eagle projects. The committee's job is to reach out and tell people about what we do -- how we serve and what our kids do. They will also try to stay in touch with young Eagle Scouts in college and beyond, since they will be a resource for the future. In addition to Anthony, Joe named Geoff Chellis and Dave Verbraska.
- Property Management is concerned with our camp properties and the need to "rationalize" them. Joe explained that last year the Council spent only \$95,000 on the camps and said, "We can't do that very long before things fall apart." He told of some upcoming tasks such as the need to upgrade No-Be's latrines to meet DEP regulations, which specify that we are not allowed to put stuff directly into the

soil. Joe said, "We have to look at our properties through the eyes of a woman, because more and more of our kids are being raised by women who are also actively participating -- and they don't like stinky latrines." Joe named Grey Rolland and Mike Semeraro.

Joe ended his presentation with a 2-part invitation. The first was for anyone who had an interest in any of the 7 "pillars" to volunteer to join that committee in order to provide some "real world" input. The second invitation was to read the plan, to understand, and to support it, saying, "If you can't support it, let us know the reason, since you'll probably have a damn good reason." He added, "After we have the plan, please don't fight it. I think it will be a good, reasonable plan."

As an afterthought, Joe realized that he had not mentioned training as part of the "Dynamic Programs" committee, and pointed out that Warren Dressler had already signed up and thanked him.

Council Status Report - Steve Gray's Follow-Up

Steve Gray had a copy of the Strategic Plan, which was so popular that he was holding the last copy before the next printing. He passed his copy around and thanked Leslie Sonkin for her work on the Marketing Committee. Steve also thanked Biff for ensuring that Three Rivers was the best among the districts for FOS presentations. Steve then thanked Ken Dutcher for the work his Advancement Committee does, saying, "He handles issues very well and takes care of problems." Another thank-you went to Warren for his work on training and as the new OA Lodge Advisor.

Steve hesitated but then congratulated Three Rivers for having the Council's best commissioner staff, citing the Roundtables, the unit service, and the unit reporting. He joked, "Barry Goldman has been doing a great job for a number of years..." and then passed on his real thanks to Sal Bellomo, just recently replaced by Barry. Steve had more thanks for our three District Execs, saying how much time an effort they have to spend to support a district that "seems to schedule a new event every week."

Steve said, "We know we have to do a better job with Cub activities and Cub camping, and we're working on that." He said that Dave Stuhr is looking at Cub overnight weekends, which also involves upgrading the camps. He said, "When Cubs camp with their moms or dads, there's a good possibility that they will continue with the Boy Scout program."

Steve said that the Council's operating budget is "a challenge because we need more staff." He estimated a field staff of 15-20 based on "total available youth", but we can barely support the small staff we now have. Steve stressed the importance of getting Cub leaders trained, including Youth Protection.

Council Status Report - Dr. Phil Mollica's Follow-Up

Phil started by thanking the commissioners present, and noted that the number of commissioners in the Council had increased by 87%, and that unit visits have also increased. Phil talked about this year's theme of "One Family, One Council," with the goal of cutting down the divide between the Council, the districts, and the units. Phil was upset by the nationwide trend of shrinking membership and asked, "Can anyone name a program in this country that has the quality and values that we instill in our youth!" He added, "This nation needs Scouting more than ever, and you know that, which is why you're here." Phil also thanked Sal for his years as District Commissioner and then joked about how Barry Goldman asked to replace Sal by telling Phil that "My whole life has been focused on this moment."

Council Status Report - Fred Creswick's Follow-Up

Fred described his Innovation and Technology Committee as a "clearing house for good ideas," with suggestions evaluated and passed along for action and implementation. He then invited people to contact him with their ideas or to join the committee, saying, "You don't need to be technical, you just need to help us solve problems."

A Commissioner Request - E-mail from the Council

Barry Messner had a request for the Council guests. He said that he and others on the commissioner staff were not receiving copies of Council e-mails sent directly to unit leaders. As a result, the commissioners were missing opportunities to follow up. Barry said that he met with Anthony Chirido who said he will try to comply. Phil said that fixing this communication problem will be easier if each commissioner were registered in the database as such, saying, "It doesn't have to be your primary role, it just has to be recorded." In response to Norman Kasser's question, Barry said that he found out about one such broadcast to unit leaders while he was attending a meeting of the Camping Committee and Grey Rolland mentioned it.

A Commissioner Request - Renewed Unit Charters

Rich Curran said that he likes to be able to personally hand a renewed charter packet to the unit leader, preferably during a blue-and-gold dinner, but he recently found out that the Council now mails the packet directly to the unit leader. Rich also thought that the Council should print a fancier version of the charter and, as an example, produced a very good looking 1929 charter from Hillsdale Troop 52, saying, "The current version looks more like someone's text message."

A Commissioner Request - Unit Rosters

Barry Messner had a follow-up request, saying that, when he used to receive a unit's new charter packet, he would first Xerox a copy of the roster and the contact information it contained. He said, "To me it was a significant help, but now I have to call Steve or Joel when I need that kind of information." Barry proposed that the Council print two copies of the roster so the unit commissioner might get one.

Finance - Leadership FOS "Call Night"

District Finance Chair Dave Wolf pointed to a handout showing that the Leadership FOS campaign was only at 63% of its goal. He proposed a "call night" to take place during the upcoming Roundtable where he will have a list of leaders who have not yet donated. Dave said that volunteers will be asked to find someone they know on the list and to call him or her with a "direct ask." Steve Leonardi thought that some on the list might actually be present at the Roundtable, to which Dave said, "Hopefully they'll have their checkbooks with them."

Finance - Community FOS Ads for the Program Guide/Calendar

Dave asked how many people present had signed up a "program partner," and then explained that he was talking about businesses who agree to buy an ad in the Council's program guide. He said, "Please do it quickly, since the print deadline is coming soon, These ads will help us reach our Community FOS goal."

Finance - Community FOS Reach-Out

Pat Stamato said that he is currently organizing a "Reach Out" dinner to be held at Mark Anthony's Restaurant on April 23. Pat said that he is trying to get the Mayor of Jersey City to attend as the featured speaker. He was confident that everything would be finalized by Friday.

Finance - Family FOS Report

Dave introduced Biff by saying, "He's doing a phenomenal job." Biff said that about 60% of the pledges have come in, and that 35 presentations are scheduled for the next three months plus 20 more that will take place in the fall. He said that his goal is to get 30 more units to agree to have a presentation, but his calls and e-mail are not being returned. Biff said, "I don't care if they respond and say 'no,' but I really want a response." He then requested those present to reach out to any unit they work with and try to get something scheduled. Barry Goldman asked Biff to provide a list that he will pass on to his unit commissioners.

Biff thanked Sal who recently volunteered to do FOS presentations and also thanked several other long-time presenters. He asked people who conduct Eagle boards to query if those units need a presentation and said that letters will be sent to all Venturing units.

About units that refused to schedule an FOS presentation, Biff guessed that the unit leader probably made the decision. As a result, he said that he intends to contact that unit's families directly with a mailing. Pat proposed a visit to the unit leader and volunteered to do it himself, which triggered a lot of jokes about "enforcers." Pat concluded by congratulating Biff and called him "relentless" and told how Biff talked him into making an FOS presentation just prior to Pat's son's wedding.

District Journey to Excellence Report

Joel referred to a "dashboard" handout consisting of a page with drawings of 17 fuel gauge-like dials, with needles ranging from near empty to near full. Three of the dials

were on hold until later in the year: "Fundraising," "Cub Camping," and "Scout Camping." Of the three membership dials, "Market Share" and "Youth Growth" were empties, but "Youth Retention" looked good at 76%. About the latter, Joel said that a "red flag goes up" when a unit recharterers with less than half the boys it had a year ago and it becomes time to "mobilize the membership team, the commissioners, and the advancement folks."

Joel said that both Cub and Scout advancement looked good as did "Community Service," which Joel called a "linchpin." He thanked Ken Dutcher, since the majority of the hours recorded came from Eagle projects with additional hours coming from projects that units posted to the "Messengers of Peace" website. Joel said that the "Chartered Org Visits" look good because we are allowed to count visits made by the District Execs. In response to Joel's question, Steve Gray ruled that the visit must be to the unit's Executive Officer (formerly Institutional Head) and not to the Chartered Organization Representative.

Joel repeated the high opinion given to the Three Rivers commissioner staff, calling it "one of the best I've ever seen." Joel warned that the increase over last month for the "Commissioners" dial was actually due to dropped units, which artificially raised the ratio of units to number of commissioners. He guessed that the "Unit Visitations" dial might be improved by better data entry, saying, "If you need help putting them in, or are not comfortable, just ask."

Joel explained that the "Unit Performance" dial was close to maximum, thanks both to on-time rechartering plus virtually every unit submitted a JTE score sheet along with their charter renewal, and the majority were for silver or gold. Joel was vague about the near-empty "Voice of the Scout" dial and asked Steve Gray for details. Steve explained that "Voice of the Scout" is a twice-a-year e-mail survey broadcast by National to all Scout families, and that the Council itself scored pretty well last year. The dial goes up when a lot of people respond to the survey, and it really goes up when a lot of people are "likely to recommend Scouting." Joel said that he had asked Anthony Chirido for details about our district's low score.

Joel said that the last three dials all looked good: "District Leadership," "District Committee," and "Unit Leadership." However Joel was concerned that many leaders have complained to him that they are trained ("some of them had Wood Badge beads"), but the ScoutNet database had no record of it. Even so, only a few took the next step of presenting their cards or records to Joel in order to have the database updated. Joel said, "This will play a critical role in the future for both the Council and the districts."

Barry Messner was concerned about how to get training records fixed and asked, "What do the unit commissioners tell the unit leaders?" Joel started with advice about new online training sessions and told Barry to ensure that the Scouter knows to log in using his member ID in order to link his training to his account. In response to Biff's question, Ken said that the system will allow anyone to skip past the membership query and then

take a training course. Joel said, "I've had people come in with a certificate, and we 'back door it' and enter the information to his account." Steve Leonardi's advice to Barry was to ask each unit leader to query his "MyScouting" account training records and to contact him or Joel directly in order to get an update.

Warren said that at one point he created a list of all untrained adults and distributed it to the commissioners and said, "It was a stack of paper yay high, but I haven't seen any come back." He said that the job is to figure out which adults were on the list due to data errors, and which were on it correctly and should be urged to take the training.

Warren said he was also told of a twin to the "MyScouting.org" website that had an extra dot: "My.Scouting.org". He said that any of a unit's key-3 may access this site to get a summary report of training and also to make alterations (but not to his own records). Joel agreed and said, "They can actually alter records themselves and don't have to rely on me to do it for them."

Camping - Summary Report

Barry Messner said that he received a report telling of a "huge jump in Cub camp registrations and projections" that he ascribed to the upcoming early-bird deadline. He said that the Council is still accepting campership applications until his committee meets again on April 30. Barry said that the early-bird fee may be used retroactively by brand new Scouts who were still Webelos at the time of the deadline. Finally, the weekly tracking sheets show that Boy Scout camp registration "looks good."

Barry was very impressed with the high quality of the brochures promoting summer camps. He was also impressed with the promotional videos posted on the Council's website, saying "A picture's worth a thousand words."

Camping - Paulsen Camperships Just for North Hudson

Mike Carp said that the Paulsen Fund of North Bergen will shortly accept applications for Cubs and Scouts in certain ZIP codes close to the sponsoring church. Mike told of past problems that needed resolution when a family paid the camp fee in advance followed by the Fund paying the same fee at the end of summer. Norman said that he tries with e-mail broadcasts to prevent the double-payment from happening. He said that his e-mail tells families not to register using the online system, which ends by asking for a payment. Instead they should register by mail using a special Council form that specifies "later payment by Paulsen."

Training - Two Upcoming Sessions

Warren said that Biff will shortly conduct a session for Cub leaders and Ken will conduct one for Scout leaders, with both posted on the Council's training website calendar. He said that he is already trying to get dates for next year's calendar.

Warren said, "When we get new leaders, the trick is to get them trained right away." He described the ideal situation of a new leader signing up and someone coming to his

community as soon as possible to conduct a session. However, at this point, Warren had not worked out how that might happen.

Training - Scoutmaster Training in Montvale (Apr 27)

Ken said that he had just finalized use of the Montvale Community Center for his upcoming Scoutmaster training session, and is thus ready to publicize it. However, he explained that the delay resulted from a Council Training Committee request to rather find a more central location, but when a three-week search came up empty, Montvale became the choice.

Thus Ken made a request to the people present to come up with suggestions. Tonight's meeting room had the size and layout that he wanted in order to fit 30 people, and he would require its use "from 7:00 AM and pretty much all day Saturday or Sunday." Ken said, "If you have a suggestion for me, please let me have a name of someone to contact -- don't just say, for example, 'Contact the Meadowlands Commission.'" In response Biff proposed Mount Carmel Church in Bayonne, and Pat suggested either the Rec Center in Secaucus, or the Hudson County Improvement Authority... Everyone broke into laughter when Ken interrupted and asked, "Is that the jail?"

Advancement - How Many Eagle Scouts?

Ken referred back to Joe Healy's earlier estimate of the Council's 300 new Eagle Scouts last year, saying that he and Fred guessed that Three Rivers was responsible for 135-140 of them: "Not quite half!"

Advancement - Cooking Merit Badge

Ken reviewed how the Cooking merit badge became Eagle-required last January and told an alarming story of an Eagle Board of Review where the Scout had never completed it and had only three weeks before turning 18. He said, "We suspended the Board and explained the problem to the Troop leaders (who objected ferociously). Fortunately the Scout was an experienced camper and cook and got it all done in 10 days. We reconvened the Board and everything was fine -- happy ending."

Advancement - Cub Scouts and the Arrow of Light

Ken told how most of his committee's activities deal with Boy Scout Life and Eagle ranks with other ranks rarely coming up. Ken invited anyone interested in Cub advancement to sign up. Later in the meeting he added an invitation for "higher awards," such as Heroism.

Ed Ference told of a pack with no Webelos, and Joel proposed that zero-Webelos might be an area of concern that the commissioner staff could look into. Joel was also puzzled about Cubs that cross over into a Scout troop without having first earned an Arrow of Light. He guessed that a stumbling block might be the Outdoorsman camping requirement and said, "If that's the case, we can go to the commissioners and tell them that kids are not getting Arrow of Light because they're not exposed to any camping opportunities."

Activities - Award Dinner and World Conservation Weekend

Mark Wrightington talked about the upcoming District Award Dinner but expressed disappointment that so few had signed up so far. He also talked about the Webelos World Conservation Weekend on April 26-27, organized by Henry Hahn. Mark pointed out that this weekend meets Joel's request for more "camping opportunities."

Activities - Earth Day at Liberty State Park

Jim Africano described the Earth Day event on April 26 sponsored by the Hudson County Improvement Authority (HCIA), which asked for a "Scouting presence," and Jim volunteered to set up his "disAbilities Awareness" demonstration area. However, he said that he needs some 25 volunteers to assist and asked for a show of hands, saying, "You can't say I'll think about it, because I always like to go into a conversation knowing that my side is taken care of." Jim guessed that attendance at Liberty State Park might get as high as 10,000. If he can get a good area of the field, Jim predicted that his event would be "awesome" with as many as 200-300 people run through it each hour.

Awards - District Award of Merit

Rich Curran thanked the people who selected the 7 awardees: Paul Adams, Albert Faccioli, Tom Gingerelli, Jean-Pierre Mascetti, Tom O'Reilly, Edward Winkler, and Michael G. Wirth. He also thanked Leslie Sonkin for organizing the dinner and Barry Goldman for agreeing to be the M.C. Rich also said that so far he received two requests for a "Service to Local Unit" award. He said that the district didn't select the awardees, but it was rather the units who made the selections and the district is simply "endorsing" them.

Closing - A Moment of Silence for Three Recent Deaths

Pat asked everyone to rise for a moment of silence in honor of Warren's mom who recently passed, of Neil Bookspan's wife, and of Phillip Ciano.

**District Committee Meeting
April 3, 2014**

Attendance

Jim Africano
Gerry Beatty
Sal Bellomo
Greg Boyle
Barbara Bruno
Mike Carp
Fred Creswick
Richard Curran
Warren Dressler
Ken Dutcher
Ed Ference
Dona Furfaro
Barry Goldman
Steve Gray
Joe Healy
Norman Kasser
Steve Leonardi
Joel Lieberman
Bob Lilley
Lenny Luizzi
Barry Messner
William Metts
Phil Mollica
Leslie Sonkin
Patrick Stamato
Marc Tarantino
Biff Van Kleef
Dave Wolf
Mark Wrightington