

**District Committee Meeting**  
**May 1, 2014**  
**One Bergen County Plaza**  
**Hackensack, NJ,**

**Key People**

Steve Leonardi, District Field Director

**Opening**

At 7:30 the people present agreed with Steve's proposal for a "start on time policy," rather than wait for late-comers. 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 May, the summer camp tracking report, the membership summary, and the "Unit/Group Status" report.

**Membership - Unit/Group Status Report**

Steve referred to this status report that listed "dropped" troops, packs, and crews that should have rechartered in January but have not yet done so. He explained the color coding, where green means that the unit will be okay as soon as some final payment or other detail is taken care of. Yellow means a more serious problem, with "a good chance it can be saved," and red indicated 10-12 permanently dropped units for the year. However, Steve noted that the loss of these units, mostly Venture crews, resulted in less than 100 boys, whereas two new units were recently chartered and six more are very close to completion. Ken Dutcher was particularly concerned about one of the dropped troops, because his advancement committee had recently received an Eagle project proposal from one of its Scouts.

Steve proposed scheduling a "summit" meeting to focus on membership and to talk about what needs to be done, such as better Webelos-to-Scout transition and "Save a Scout" programs. He asked if anyone present would be willing to participate and said that he wanted the District Membership Committee to become "more engaged."

Lillian Molnar asked about the possibility of gathering the few remaining interested boys from each of the dropped units and combining them into a troop or crew in some central location. Biff told of a Scout who tried to join a Venturing crew in a nearby town, but couldn't pull it off because his father was often not available to supply transportation. He said, "That makes it into two problems, one for the Scout and one for the parent." Steve told Lillian, "You're talking about the 'Save a Scout' program," and said that it's where boys in a dropped unit are contacted and invited to join another nearby unit. He said, "It takes people power. Who's going to do that?" Biff proposed that the Scoutmaster or Cubmaster might e-mail the families.

Tom Molnar envisioned a scenario where a unit conducts its final meeting, and its Scouts are driven to a potential receiving unit, while Lillian described a failing unit where only one Cub Scout shows up. Rather than have that one Cub inevitably drop out also, she

recommended giving the family some transfer options, saying, "We wind up losing these single kids as we try to keep them in their home towns." Steve said, "This is something we should discuss at a membership summit: What are we doing to save Scouts."

### **Membership - Venture Crews are Special**

Steve said, "Crews are different, and in fact we don't really support crews." He told about three crews he knew of, two in one town and a third in a nearby town, saying, "It's a tough age group in their upper teens, working crazy jobs in the summer and eventually a bunch of them will age out." He invited Lillian to come to his proposed membership summit and to describe for them the problem and need she identified. He proposed mailing an invitation to families in order to let them know about options, saying, "A lot of them don't know about what's going on outside their particular pack or troop."

### **Finance - Leadership FOS**

Steve said that he had recently secured a Leadership FOS pledge for \$1,500 but didn't think it was appropriate to name the donor. The result is that we are over \$12k on the way to the goal of \$15k. Biff said, "We'll make it." Steve agreed, saying that we are still waiting for pledges from 25 more Scouters. He also noted that TRD was the only district of the three that voluntarily raised its 2104 goal from last year (was \$10k).

### **Finance - Family FOS**

Steve estimated \$54k received to date [*goal = \$84k*]. Biff said many presentations are scheduled to take place in May and several more in September-October when troops will have Courts of Honor after summer camp. However, Biff was unhappy about how the percentage of participating units is measured, saying, "We are expected to present to 120 of our approximately 160 units, but we don't really have 160." He explained that a better number would be 130 after excluding Venturing crews, Explorer posts and ships, LDS [Mormon] units, and special needs units. Biff was confident that we will reach our goal of 120 presentations in 2014, which should translate to over 90% rather than 75%. Lillian said she ran into the same problem with her popcorn numbers, since "crews aren't going to sell."

Biff said that FOS presentations are far more productive when the unit is holding a special event rather than a regular meeting. Tom agreed with Biff that a regular meeting might work in the fall, but "If you show up in April, they're all out playing baseball."

Biff said that he intends to handle the 20 crews, 8 posts, and the 1 ship with a direct mailing to the families. He is still trying to contact some traditional units that have not yet responded to his calls and e-mails, and is considering using direct mail for them as well.

Steve expressed his appreciation to the FOS presenters here tonight and to the others not here. He cited examples of presenters responding to last minute requests. He said, "There's a bunch of people who really avail themselves to make sure that presentations get covered." In what he called a "sign of the times," Steve said that he compared units

who gave this year versus how those exact same units did last year and found that "the numbers of givers and the number of dollars are way ahead."

### **Finance - Family FOS Presenter Training**

Biff proposed a training session of just TRD presenters, where each gives a sample. Steve liked the idea and thought it could be especially valuable for new presenters to hear how experienced people do it, since "Everyone has their own 'gig' or approach." Biff said he will invite the Council's Finance Director to attend.

### **Finance - Community FOS**

Biff said that he spoke to District Chair Pat Stamato, who is also in charge of the Community FOS campaign. He said that Pat decided to postpone until June a dinner event that would have included several Jersey City politicians. Biff quoted Pat as saying, "I can't do it during elections because all the money they collect has to go towards the elections." Steve said that the Community FOS campaign will rely on both Pat's dinner and on a PBA event to be organized by Sal Bellomo.

Biff said that Anthony Chirido told him that Lenape Trail District will focus on selling ads in the Program Guide/Calendar. Steve said, "But that's already past. Dave Wolf secured a center page for us by Inserra, plus two more small ads."

### **District Journey to Excellence (JTE) Report**

Steve referred to the 1-page JTE "Dashboard" report with its 17 fuel gauge type graphics. He said that Joel Lieberman had reviewed the entire report last month, and so he preferred this month to go over just three. As an example, he thought that people might wonder why the "Cub Camping" and "Scout Camping" dials were completely empty. Steve remarked that Three Rivers had reached JTE Silver Level in 2013.

Norman Kasser said that Joel had been vague last month when he got to the "Voice of the Scout" dial, and so he had done some research to fill in the blanks. Steve said that the numbers are based on a survey e-mail sent to various people and found that no one present had ever received such a survey. Norman explained, "The survey is supposed to go to families, not to us guys, which is why we're not getting them. In the survey, the two most important questions are, 'Are we delivering a quality Scouting experience?' and 'Would you recommend Scouting to others?' When there's a lot of Yes responses, then the arrow on the dial goes way over." He added, "The 'NPS' label on the dial stands for 'Net Promoter Score'; that is, how many families are willing to promote Scouting to others minus those not willing."

Steve said that he had received some feedback from Council Scout Exec Steve Gray. For example, Cub families felt little or no ownership in the program, with corresponding high Cub turnover. One specific complaint from parents was about chaos and disorganization during Cub meetings. Lillian said that her experience was that chaos was often caused by parents just conversing with each other and letting their younger siblings run around the room. She questioned, "And then they're complaining that pack nights are chaotic?"

Steve said, "It's a question of acceptability level," and told of his own experience with a new pack being formed. While he and Mike Cowan were in one room briefing parents, his wife Judy was in the gym teaching Cubs how to make ice cream with two tin cans rolled on the floor. His reaction when he entered the Cub room was, "This place is chaotic!" He said, "In fact they were just kids engaged in the program and having fun, but my perception was chaos."

### **Camping - Numbers**

Steve referred to the "Summer Camp Tracking Report" listing the Council's five camps, and giving various numbers for each. Barry pointed out that far more Scouts from out-of-council had signed up for No-Be-Bo-Sco than had any of our own three districts, to which Steve joked, "Yes, 'out-of-council' is our best district."

Lillian asked, "Are we now about where we should be for this time of year?" Steve responded by reviewing the chart and pointing out the first two columns showing numbers from 2012 followed by a steep drop in 2013. He said that the goals for 2014 were "in line with history" and were set just a bit higher than 2013, and that Turrell, No-Be, and Floodwood were well on their way to exceeding those goals. On the other hand, in past years TRD typically sent about 100 Cubs to Camp Lewis versus the computer projection for 2014 currently set at 80.

Norman referred to attendance at Turrell, which dropped by about 160 Scouts between 2012 and 2013. He said that then-Camp Director Anthony Chirido was angry that many troops said they would attend that summer but failed to show up, and so Anthony responded by insisting on firm deposits this year paid in advance. Biff, who was present at Turrell in 2013, told of troops who said they would bring 5 actually coming with 15, and troops promising to bring 30 actually coming with 10. He said that it was so confusing that he had to count medical forms in order to get a firm headcount. Steve suggested to Barry Messner that this was a topic that the Council camping Committee might want to discuss.

### **Camping - Promotions**

Steve asked Barry if he considered our camp promotions to be well organized or more "ad hoc." Barry replied that families receive direct e-mails and that FOS presentations typically include words about summer camp. He said that this year's brochures were very well done and that the camp websites have excellent videos, and Tom liked the idea of including brochures in each unit's rechartering packet. About the e-mails to families, Barry said that the Commissioner staff would also like to be included in order to better help them do their job, saying, "We've been trying to get the Council to add us so that we see everything that they send to families." Barry also pointed out that a camp promotion is a natural lead-in for an FOS presentation.

Lillian referred back to the camp tracking numbers for TRD Cubs going to Yaw Paw, currently projected at 185. She was confident that the actual number will soon get much

higher, saying, "Last year at least 30 kids signed up for one week and decided to extend it to two and even three. Also, this was a cold and lingering winter, and people have simply not yet started thinking about summer. They're not feeling the warm weather yet." In response to Steve's question, Leslie said that the Council used to mail CDs and that they should consider mailing videos on flash drives, which Warren Dressler said can be very inexpensive.

Warren said he once visited the mall at Riverside Square, where a section was devoted to tables promoting various summer camps, but the Scouts were not represented because "We couldn't compete." Lillian and Leslie both agreed that Scout camps should have been there, and Leslie told how she used to do camp promotions by telling the story of how her son switched from a costly commercial camp to Yaw Paw, where he had a lot more fun and where the fee was much cheaper. Lillian said her camp promotions start by asking who likes to shoot BB guns and bow-and-arrows. Steve was surprised to learn that most commercial camps don't have shooting sports. Warren again recommended setting up a table at Riverside Square and manning it with parents who could talk with other parents, and gave some advice as to how to get out more information. He said, "They made the 'New Jersey Camping' event as part of their promotion to get people into the mall." Lillian said that there is a 'Parents Paper' that starts listing special camps in March. Steve concluded that these were good ideas that just required 'people power' to make them happen.

### **Training - Cub Leader Training**

Warren said a "Trainers Conference" is scheduled for May 10. He explained that training of new Cub leaders is best done "sitting around a table and being interactive," rather than putting things on a screen and talking about them. For location, Warren said that Pat Stamato had pointed him to a senior center in Secaucus, which he described as "perfect for Cub training," being big, having circular tables ("good for buzz groups"), and easy to get to. Leslie added that Secaucus is "Scout-friendly" with a mayor who was himself a Scout in the local troop and who wants us to use the facility. Warren said that Cub Leaders are willing to travel to receive training and gave examples of people driving all the way to Bayonne and to Harrington Park. Warren said that the meaning of "training" is evolving from "Let me teach you how to tie a square knot" to "Let me share my experiences with you and coach you."

### **Advancement - The Eagle Process "Road Show"**

Ken Dutcher said that he and Ed Ference were considering doing a fall repeat of their "Life-to-Eagle Road Show," when troop leaders are briefed on the Eagle Project Workbook and other aspects of the Eagle process. In response to Steve's question, Ken said that the previous session took place about 18 months ago, had a good turnout (about 30), and was very successful. Norman pointed out that interest was high back then, because the workbook had been completely revised, to which Ken responded that interest is still high as reflected by calls he gets. Ken said that Ed wants to add a module to the next session that will cover the alternate rank requirements for Scouts with disabilities.

### **Advancement - Parents and the Eagle Process**

Steve told about a parent who came to the Council office to pick up her son's Eagle packet in spite of the fact that his Eagle ceremony had already taken place. He said, "A lot of parents really want their boys to reach Eagle, but they don't know how they can best help," and asked Ken if he had considered conducting a "seminar geared toward parents." Ken agreed that it was a good idea, but then gave reasons why the sessions are currently for troop leaders and not for youth or parents. The first is that the learning and knowledge has to be "absorbed into the troop," whereas talking to youth or parents would be "one and done." The second reason is that some of the discussion is about the "aims and methods of Scouting," which would not be of interest to youth or parents. The third reason for not including parents is to avoid a conversation that starts with, "I know of a boy in another troop, and this is all he had to do for his Eagle project!" Ken said that such a parent probably read about the project in a newspaper article that just gave the highlights, and "We would find ourselves having a debate with the parents." On the other hand, a parent would be welcome to the session if he or she were a member of the Troop Committee.

Leslie proposed a "parent's night," and told of her own experience when her son was reaching Eagle, and all the reading and research that she did. Tom added that parents should also be aware that an Eagle Court of Honor should be special and not treated the same as earning a First Class badge, as happened in a 5-minute ceremony that he attended. Tom also told about research he had done.

### **Advancement - New Merit Badges**

Bill Metts asked Ken how his Scout leader training sessions handle newly-issued merit badges, such as "Digital Technology," which recently replaced "Computers." Ken replied that Ed shows the attendees a sampling of pamphlets for the new badges, such as "Mining in Society," and "Search and Rescue," and then encourages them to stay current with new badges and changes to existing badges.

### **Advancement - Life-to-Eagle Sessions for Scouts**

In response to Norman's question, Ken said that No-Be and Turrell both offer special summer camp weeks where Scouts can earn a few Eagle-required merit badges plus hear about the process and about Eagle projects. Ken said, "The session mostly about motivation, but I'm not sure how practical it is." Norman said, "It would be very practical if they taught how to make a time line and a to-do list."

### **Program - District Events**

Mark Wrightington told about two upcoming district events: the Rocket Launch (May 4) and the Fishing Derby (June 14). Mark said that the April 26-27 Webelos Conservation Weekend went well "except for the rain," with the majority of participants coming from Saddle Brook, Palisades Park, and Hasbrouck Heights. In response to Biff's question, Mark explained that the original intent of the weekend was for Scouts to attend with Webelos from their feeder pack "to get to know each other, but in fact very few Scout troops attend." Mark said that the program allows Webelos to work on requirements for

Outdoorsman, Forester, and Naturalist, plus Leave No Trace and the World Conservation Award. Mark said that Henry Hahn had run the event, which raised the possibility that next year's might be moved from Camp Lewis to Yaw Paw. Mark pointed out that Lewis was overwhelmed that weekend with three or four other things all happening at the same time.

**Program - Earth Day in Liberty State Park (Apr 26)**

Leslie said that TRD set up a "disAbilities Awareness" station at the Hudson County Earth Day fair that was "a terrific event." She said that organizer Jim Africano was assisted by Scouts and leaders from Bayonne troops 19 and 25. Ed Quinn called the T25 leaders "outstanding in their full uniforms complete with campaign hats." Leslie added that they also had recruitment information with them. As for next year, she pointed out that there will be a conflict with the 2015 Weboree.

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

Leslie wanted to make sure that all Weboree staff members had registered so as to know how many T-shirts and hats to order. She said that the hats this year will be particularly cool and that the T-shirt emblems will be fully embroidered. A participants meeting is scheduled for May 21 at the Council office, where Cubmasters and Den Leaders can have their questions answered.

**Program - Upcoming ScoutFest (Oct 10-12)**

Leslie said that Gerry Beatty will be our lead for the fall ScoutFest, but she pointed to a flyer and gave some details. We'll be responsible for manning the "Wilderness Challenge," the "Pinewood Derby," and a "Cook Off." About the Pinewood, she said that Ernie Sprance will miss it due to a conflict and that it will not be a competition but will be just for fun, similar to a past Derby Day that was open to the public.

**Program - Upcoming OA Trade-o-Ree May 18)**

Ed Quinn said that the Trade-o-Ree will take place on May 18 in Allendale. He said that over 50 vendors had signed up for tables and that there will be a silent auction for various memorabilia.

**Program - Family Camping Weekends (TBD)**

Mark said that each of the three districts had been tasked with running a family camping weekend at one of our camps. Lewis will need one in order to ensure a 5-year certification. Mark didn't recall the date that he had committed us to (possibly October), but Warren was certain that the correct date will be found on the event calendar that will be distributed at the Council's June 2 Program Launch. Warren also said that the three weekends are part of the Council's marketing campaign, and will thus be supervised by Anthony Chirido instead of Grey Rolland.

**Program - Summary Calendar of 2014-15 Events**

Barry asked Mark to produce a summary calendar of 2014-15 Cub events similar to one he used to publish in August for the former Tantaqua District. Mark readily agreed and

said that events on the district's website were posted as early as last June, but he added, "I don't think people actually look at the website." As an alternate, Mark proposed a direct e-mail broadcast to Cubmasters and pack Committee Chairs. Although the current TRD Doubleknot system cannot do that, Mark offered to create his own broadcast list using cut-and-paste from the Doubleknot addresses. Mark also thought this method better than relying on people to attend the Program Launch or the TRD Roundtable/Picnic. He concluded, "I don't think we do a good job of getting the word out, and maybe we should have a break-out session to work out something better."

### **Joel Lieberman Promoted**

Steve said that Joel Lieberman had been promoted to District Director for the Ramapo Valley District and said, "He officially started today, but there will be a transition period of a month, because he's a real resource for us in this district." Steve said that there will be some "shuffling" to ensure that we always have three execs in Three Rivers (Lillian quietly reminded everyone that we were once promised four), but Steve had no additional information.

### **Trip McMillan Remembered**

Steve asked for a moment of silence to honor former NNJC Scout Exec Trip McMillan, saying, "We lost a good friend of Scouting. He did lots of great things for our council, and he had a great attitude and approach to life and a great love of people." Biff said that a memorial service will take place in Massapequa in Long Island.

**District Committee Meeting  
May 1, 2014**

**Attendance**

Warren Dressler

Ken Dutcher

Norman Kasser

Steve Leonardi

Bob Lilley

Barry Messner

Bill Metts

Tom Molnar

Lillian Molnar

Ed Quinn

Leslie Sonkin

Biff Van Kleef

Mark Wrightington