

**District Committee Meeting
September 4, 2014
One Bergen County Plaza
Hackensack, NJ,**

Key People

Pat Stamato, District Chairman
Steve Leonardi, District Field Director

Opening

Ed Quinn led the Pledge, and Biff Van Kleef led the Scout Law. Handouts were tonight's agenda, numbers from summer camp, numbers from Friends of Scouting (FOS), a scanned business card from John Felice, and a revised sheet of contact information for the NNJC professional/volunteer staff. There were also event flyers for the Scout Museum's opening, ScoutFest, and the district golf outing.

Joe Mertens is Our Newest District Exec

Steve introduced Joe as the third Three Rivers District Exec with a bit of his background including Camp Director this summer at the Cub Resident camp at Lewis. It turned out that everyone present tonight had already met Joe at some time. Joe added that he had also served on the Membership Committee. Steve asked each of the other people to introduce himself.

One of tonight's handouts was a revised sheet of contact information for the NNJC professional/volunteer staff, with Joe's name added, and Joel Lieberman transferred to the Ramapo Valley District. Warren Dressler pointed out that the Council's online website still has the old unrevised version, and Steve suggested that Warren mention that fact at the next Executive Board meeting.

Membership - A Meeting in Bayonne

Pat told of a meeting about recruiting that took place in Bayonne the prior Tuesday, consisting of priests and unit leaders from Catholic-sponsored troops and packs, along with Bishop Tom Donato and Father Don Hummel. Representing NNJC were Scout Exec Steve Gray, Eric Chamberlin, and Steve Leonardi. The plan is to have Hudson County act as the pilot program where priests will be encouraged to support Scouting in their parishes, possibly linked to the CCD classes they already conduct. Pat said, "The potential in Hudson County is tremendous," and he estimated some 80,000 kids of Scout age.

Steve said that Catholic churches sponsor about half of the Hudson County units, although only three sponsor both a troop and a pack. Steve pointed out that the Bishop can only encourage local priests but cannot direct them.

Membership – Optimism for 2014

Steve recalled that, after all units submitted their current rosters in early 2014, Three Rivers had lost some 400 boys compared with the prior year. On the other hand, we have

an opportunity in 2014 to make up some of the losses. Early spring recruiting efforts picked up about 150 boys, and it's possible that a good fall recruiting might pick up the other 250.

Steve then posed the question, "How do we crack the membership nut? Doesn't that sound like a lot of kids?" He then described some research he had done going back over past years, looking for an average of how many new boys a given unit in the district might pick up in a year. He concluded, "If each pack and each troop simply repeats that average plus one more boy, we can add 800!" Steve also made the point that the large size of Three Rivers can work to our advantage, saying that for a smaller pre-consolidation district, 250 would be near-impossible, but we have a good chance now.

Steve was also optimistic based on some 7,000 flyers placed into 20 schools in Jersey City. He said, "Last year they recruited 40 kids in the fall without benefit of these flyers. On September 1 we already had to order new flyers!" Pat cited Bayonne Pack 19, which had dropped to just 6 boys but managed to recover back to 30 in just two years. Jersey City Pack 475 also managed a great increase. He said, "It's doable."

Steve said, "You know, it's not the kids who are the problem. It's the lack of adults willing to give up the time to run a program."

Membership - The Membership Committee

Steve said that he had asked Joe to "kind of take charge" of the district's Membership Committee. He said that they had held a few meetings during the Roundtables, and had come up with some good ideas, but "they never got engaged, and nothing got past that stage." Joe was a good choice, because he had participated in some of those meetings.

In response to Paul Adam's question about churches that sponsor just a pack or just a troop, Steve replied, "We don't have a shortage of units," noting that, although we lost 8 units last year, we gained another 8 to take their place, with the possibility of four more after that.

Membership – A Meeting Chaired by Dr. Geoff Zoeller

Barry Messner described a meeting he attended last month chaired by Dr. Geoff Zoeller of the Patriots' Path Council. He also passed around an "excellent" pamphlet on recruiting that Zoeller created, saying that it had also come to National's attention. Ken Hesse was willing to give Zoeller time to speak at the upcoming September Roundtable (Steve thought that delaying until October was too late) and said that he would double-check with fellow Commissioner Bob Hastings. Steve said he will have copies of the pamphlet printed for distribution at the Roundtable. Steve noted that NNJC had recently run two well-attended training sessions on doing roundups, one in Paramus and one in West Orange.

Membership – Cub Packs Need Two Recruitments – Phone-a-Thon (Sep 10)

Steve said, "We need to push for all of our Cub packs to do two recruitments. There are a lot of packs who do just one recruitment aimed for just first and second graders."

Recalling how he and Biff had spent a lot of time on the phone successfully scheduling FOS presentations, he proposed a similar phone-a-thon to urge Cubmasters to recruit in both September and again in October. Steve had printouts with contact information that he handed out to volunteers. In addition, several people present said they will meet with Steve at the Council office on Wednesday September 10 at 7:00 PM to conduct a phone-a-thon. Cubmasters will be asked to choose a date in September and to let the Council know what it is. They will also be urged to choose a second date in October.

As an aside, Steve remarked about a database look-up that showed Cub packs losing members between spring and fall, presumably due to Webelos aging out, but he did not see a corresponding increase of new Boy Scouts.

Membership – Flyers in Schools

Steve said the Council keeps track of which units have scheduled recruitments by their request for flyers, but very few requests have been received. Presumably some packs create their own flyers, and Ken agreed, since that might allow them to e-mail an electronic copy to families, and Lillian said that some schools had implemented a "virtual backpack." She also said that schools will send out "flyers galore" during the first weeks of school, so this might be too soon to include a Scout flyer, saying "Parents are still in the mode of let's get our kids to school and let's get supplies."

Steve said that some school principals who won't allow flyers in schools might be okay with the bookmarks that the Council has with www.BeAScout.org printed on the front and a blank back for unit contact information. He added, "We also have lawn signs and peer-to-peer 'business cards.'" Ken Hesse asked Steve for a replacement lawn sign.

Finance – Family Friends of Scouting (FOS)

Biff referred to one of tonight's handouts and said that Family FOS was just \$4,000 short of its goal of \$85,000 (Steve said: "Actually \$3,065 short") and was optimistic that the goal would be reached after the remaining 12 presentations have been made. However, Biff was concerned that the overall 3-part FOS goal for Three Rivers would not be met, which will adversely affect the district's Journey to Excellence application for 2014.

Finance – District Golf Outing (Oct 7)

Steve referred to the flyer about the district's "Golf Classic & Dinner" on October 7, saying that Dave Wolf was able to get the Inserra ShopRite supermarket chain to sponsor the event and pay for a lot of the costs: "a big plus." Bob Lilley said he plans to attend and get a hole-in-one. Pat will also attend.

Finance – Leadership Friends of Scouting (FOS)

Bob Lilley stated flatly, "I don't want any more money for the Leadership campaign," since the goal of \$15,000 had been exceeded by over \$1,500. Any additional money will be applied to 2015.

Rechartering the District for 2015

Bob volunteered to handle rechartering Three Rivers for 2015, and asked for the paperwork by October to ensure that everything is complete by mid January year, saying, "How can we ask units to get their charters in on time if we don't do it ourselves?" Steve said he has the paperwork the Bob needs but forgot to bring it with him tonight.

Finance – 2014 Popcorn Sale

Steve said that the first of two Show-n-Sell campaigns is underway with the second due to start on Sep 14. He said that about 100 units had signed up to sell, remarking that last year also had 100, but 10 of those never sold anything. Lillian said she is contacting units that have not signed up yet, "concentrating on top and bottom," and was surprised that she had not yet heard from some of last year's top sellers.

Steve said that orders for this year's Show-n-Sell exceeded last year's orders, but noted that we have to wait until units return unsold product. Lillian pointed out that things are even more complicated, because many units don't bother doing returns, but rather use the unsold items to fill take-order needs. Thus in theory, a unit may have \$0 for their take-order items. When the sale ends, she said, "There's really no way to accurately determine how much resulted from Show-n-Sell and how much from Take-Order."

Lillian and Steve agreed that we are very close to reaching our goal of 110 sign-ups, and Steve was certain that, if all 110 sold popcorn, we will reach our goal of... Steve recalled that the goal is somewhere between \$3,000 and \$4,000. About the second Show-n-Sell, Lillian said some confusion came from an early notice giving the wrong date of Sep 4.

Camping – Good Attendance at All Summer Camps

Barry Messner passed on a message from Grey Rolland: "We had a great year with minimum incidents." He cited 354 more Cubs and Scouts this year than last with Turrell showing the best increase with 110, and Lewis the smallest increase with 25.

Joe said that the above numbers meant that the Council's goals were also exceeded, with Three Rivers contributing its share (except for Lewis). He said that Lewis' number were increasing "slowly but surely," and said that there's been a "change in clientele."

Biff thought camping numbers might be increased if each FOS presentation were accompanied at the same time by a camp promotion, to which Tom and Lillian Molnar told how they often did just that, with Tom doing FOS and Lillian doing the camps, complete with photos taken when their son was attending. Tom liked being able to say that FOS money can be applied to the camps, and he also liked having two different

people speaking "so they don't always hear the same voice." Lillian liked the idea that she could stage-whisper something that Tom forgot to say and vice-versa.

Camping – Resident Camp at Lewis

In response to Norman Kasser's question about the Lewis experiment with a provisional den, Joe said that he hadn't expected more than 10 boys and was happy with the five that actually signed up "as a good start." Joe went on to say that "Cubs will come, so the problem is getting a mom or dad to come with them." He also pointed out the value of having a summer program to cut down on the "attrition" that typically occurs between June and September when packs have nothing going on. We try to tell parents that Camp Lewis is "not the Ritz," but it's much better than what they might be expecting.

Camping – Preliminary Thinking: A Day Camp Closer to Home

Steve said that talk had started about running a Three Rivers District day camp in Hudson County next summer. Steve was not part of the conversation, but was certain that all talk was very preliminary, adding, "It's not as easy as it sounds," for example there has to be access to water for swimming. BB guns will likely be out, but archery should be OK. The hope is to avoid using busses, since "they drive up the expenses dramatically." Joe said that Lewis had been considered and rejected as a day camp.

Tom warned against retrying the failed "traveling day camp" experiment of some years past. The concept of a district running its own day camp was not new to Steve, who had worked for a time with the Southern NJ Council, which had district-run camps. However, Steve said, "I wasn't there from Year-1. Their camps were already established with sites at state parks, and so forth." On the plus side, Scout Exec Steve Gray said it would be worth the effort if this proposed day camp were to attract as few as 40 Cubs, while Steve was thinking that he could get 100 kids from Jersey City alone.

Biff wondered if we might open the camp to non-Cub Scouts as a recruiting tool. Steve hesitated then said that it should be discussed along with the other issues, with insurance being a potential problem. He then said, "But we won't run a recreational day camp program for a town. The camp is meant to be a primary offering to registered Cub Scouts and their families."

In response to Norman's question, Pat said that a lot of Cubs from Bayonne commute to Camp Pouch in Staten Island, and that his own sons did so when they were Cubs. He said, "I liked it because it was so close." Biff reminded Pat about plans to close the bridge next year in order to raise the road bed to accommodate large container ships.

Paul Adams asked about the Council's property in Alpine, NJ, but that was quickly dismissed, because it has no access to water and has no playground other than a small graveled parking lot. About the plans for a day camp in Hudson County, Steve concluded, "You heard it first here."

Program – ScoutFest (Oct 10-12)

Ken Hesse said that online registration was posted for both attendees and staff, but the latter was password protected. Steve explained that so many people were expected to volunteer for staff that they were being told to contact the coordinator for their area of interest in order to get the password needed.

Lillian was surprised that staff members were being charged \$30 (early-bird), but Steve said that it was comparable to the \$25 charged for being on staff at the Weboree, saying that Weboree has the advantage of being a long-established quality event, with a long history letting people know what to expect. However, Ken pointed out that the Weboree fee includes food, a T-shirt, and a cap ("the whole nine yards"), whereas ScoutFest people must bring their own food.

The early bird fee for Scouts and parents is \$30 per person. Steve said, "The fee is what it is. If you want a laser light show, you have to pay for it."

[Editor's note: Research after tonight's meeting showed that the actual fee for a weekend staff member is \$25 (no early-bird discount) with the option to purchase four meals for an additional \$10. The \$25 includes a hat, backpack, flashlight, nametag, and patch.]

Program – Review of Other Planned Events

Ken Hesse said that the annual October Pirate Quest/Gold Rush event was set aside in favor of ScoutFest. November will have the Merit Badge Fair and a First Aid Rally. December will have the Bowl-a-Thon.

About the Merit Badge Fair, Bob Lilley said that attendance from out-of-state, such as Pennsylvania, exceeded the local attendance. He added that each year the pre-registration number keeps increasing. There is no fee nor any plans to charge one.

Grand Opening of the Scout Museum (Oct 5)

Although the Northeast Region Scout Museum in Rochelle Park has actually been open for business since the late 90's, Ed Quinn as Curator said there was never an official dedication, because the building never got a certificate of occupancy (CO) until now. Ed described the effort required to get building and fire inspectors to come in and approve. Ed also described the ceremony and snacks that he and Scouts from Troop 114 will provide.

Training – National Youth Leadership Training (NYLT) (Aug 17-23)

Warren was disappointed with the number of attendees this year, even though the training sessions had the same high quality as past years with the usual "rave reviews." New this year was the NYLT Facebook page that got "good feedback from marketing types."

<https://www.facebook.com/NYLTNNJC/timeline?filter=2>

Training: October Scoutmaster Training to be Finalized

Ken Dutcher said that he will shortly post the next training session for Scoutmasters and Assistants. He asked Pat to help him contact the office of the Mayor of Secaucus in order to reserve a spot at the Senior Center, saying that he will set a date as soon as he has a chance to inspect the facility and ensure that he had access. The date will be either the weekend before ScoutFest or the weekend after. Warren predicted that he will be very happy with the facility as soon as he sees it.

Training: Need to Schedule a Cub Leader-Specific Session

In response to Norman's request for a session to train the new Den Leaders in the Hoboken Cub packs, Biff told Warren that he was considering the last Wednesday in either September or October. His preference would be a Sunday in Secaucus, either 1:00-3:00 PM or 2:00-4:00 PM. Biff also planned a second session in either Westwood or Oradell.

Although Biff didn't think he was ready to use the new syllabus from National, he did intend to give his students a new "Den Leader's Guide Sampler," with sample meeting plans for new Tiger and Wolf Den Leaders. Biff showed the back cover with the Boy Scout Oath and Law and said that Cub Scouts will be mandated in September 2015 to convert from the current Promise and Law of the Pack to the Boy Scout versions. His recommendation to Cub leaders is to start the conversion now using a "repeat after me."

Training – Is BALOO Mandatory for a Cub Pack Attending ScoutFest?

Lillian said she had just attended a meeting where some Cub leaders said they could not attend ScoutFest because none of their leaders went through BALOO training, and worse, the Council training calendar had no BALOO sessions scheduled. The requirement did not ring true to the people present and triggered a lengthy conversation. Part of the conversation was about whether or not BALOO was really mandatory for ScoutFest, with the consensus being "No," and part was about how to quickly organize a training session and then publicize it.

Steve's guess was that a miscommunication occurred. His guess was that a BALOO session prior to ScoutFest would shortly be posted, and that the upcoming ScoutFest was a way to encourage attendance. Steve said, "Tom [Gingerelli] is doing this as a service to help get more BALOO-trained folks and using ScoutFest as a reason for attending. But if a unit wants to go to ScoutFest, BALOO should not be a reason for not going."

Warren passed on some information about the training itself, saying that the current syllabus is 15 years old and due for a revision, where BALOO will become part-1 and Outdoor Leader Skills will become part-2. The intention of BALOO is to tell Cub leaders how to run a safe Cub overnight, and thus a lot of its current content is unneeded, such as tinfoil cooking.

In response to Rich Curran's question, Warren was pretty sure that our district could schedule its own BALOO session "as long as we follow the same syllabus that the

Council uses." He added, "When the Council schedules a session up in Oakland, it's really not beneficial to Scout parents in Hudson County or even parts of Bergen County." Rich asked about NNJC's Camp Alpine, but Biff said that 90% of BALOO takes place indoors, and Alpine has no indoor facility.

Ken Dutcher asked Norman if the Three Rivers online calendar could have a link to the Council's training calendar. *[Editor's note: That link is already in place. That is, when someone accesses the calendar to see Three Rivers events, he will also automatically see any Council training sessions at the same time. The problem that came up during tonight's meeting was that the Council Training Committee had not yet posted any sessions at all, including the BALOO session being discussed.]*

Training – Unit Leaders Still Can't Update Training Dates

Norman referred back to an announcement that Warren made last April, in which he said that unit leaders would be given access to update training records for people in their units. Norman said that he logged into My-Dot-Scouting.org back in April and altered the date of his wife's Youth Protection. He then logged out and back in to find that the change "did not take." He said that he tried again last night and found that all training date fields are now protected. Warren said, "Yes, something new was rolled out during the summer, but I haven't had a chance to look at the details." His understanding was that, in the current implementation, the district's Key-3 now have the ability to designate three volunteers and grant them access.

Advancement – Yet Another Revision to the Eagle Project Workbook

Ed Ference said that National had posted a revised version of the Eagle Project Workbook in the spring. The most important change consists of one more page added to the end of the workbook plus an extra check-box. The extra page is titled "Navigating the Project," and the check-box was added to the page where four people sign to say they had reviewed the Scout's proposed plan and gave their approval for letting the project proceed.

The check-box is where the project's beneficiary verifies that he was given a copy of the "Navigating" page and, presumably, has read it. Ed explained the purpose, saying, "This way there's no problems in the future, such as, 'The Priest wanted something else...' that wasn't in the plan. This makes it easier for the Scout so he doesn't have to worry that the beneficiary is looking for something else." *[Editor's note: The critical part of the "Navigating" page tells the beneficiary to ask for changes to the plan before signing his approval. After approval it states, "This is not the time to request changes or additions beyond what was originally agreed."]*

Ken Dutcher said that he will use the upcoming Roundtable to ask Scoutmasters to begin working with this latest revision, plus he has already informed many troops in northern Bergen County. Steve advised Ken to contact Anthony Chirido at the Council office and ask him to include a notice in the next weekly Council e-newsletter, saying "This is a major change that affects the entire Council."

Remarking that this is the fourth or fifth revision to the new format workbook since it came out three years ago, Ken said, "This is getting a little distracting."

Advancement – Call for Another Star-to-Eagle Workshop

In response to Steve's question, Ken Dutcher said that his last "Star-to-Eagle Workshop" occurred two years ago and was very well attended. He said that he will schedule another as soon as he can find the time and a location. The session will take about 2-3 hours and will be open primarily to Scoutmasters and unit Advancement Chairs. Ken thought the idea of running a session for boys and their parents was not a good use of his time. He said, "We want to train the unit leaders so they can pass the message on to their organizations. If we train the kids, it's a 'one-and-done,' and we would be doing it four times a year, which we don't have time to do." Ken added that some of the examples given during his training are "pretty candid and blunt, and I don't want boys present and listening to messages being conveyed at an adult level."

Biff suggested the Paramus Elks Club as a possible location, and Warren suggested Secaucus. Ken Hesse proposed a session during the district's spring camporee in March when a lot of unit leaders can be expected to attend. Ken Dutcher joked that he liked March, because that gives him six months to plan. Hesse was thinking about Liberty State Park, where Dutcher can use a pavilion that has the electricity he requires.

Advancement – A Survey for Merit Badge Counselors

In response to Norman's question, Ken Dutcher said that he had not yet heard back from the Council Advancement Committee with answers to questions that Norman had posed in an e-mail last week. Norman joked, "Of course, no one here knows what we're talking about," and then explained that he had discovered an unpublicized survey posted on the Council's website in the section dealing with merit badge counselors. The survey starts with, "Would you like to continue to volunteer as a Merit Badge Counselor," and goes on to ask which badges you counsel, and what training did you receive. Norman's question to the Advancement Committee was, basically, how will they follow up when someone hits the "send" button? Will they respond by updating the database?

Ed Ference said that he attended a meeting where it was stated that a Merit Badge Counselor would be dropped if he never attended a training session. Bill Metts said that the Committee intends to mail letters to everyone on the database, and to drop anyone who does not renew by May 31, 2015. Bill mentioned some names currently on the database that he knew should not be there, such as Neil Bookspan, who moved to another state, and Jim Taranto, who is deceased. Bill joked that several of the deceased in the database were also registered voters in Hudson County.

Communications

Biff was sorry that Norman had not broadcast a reminder about tonight's meeting within the last day or two. Norman said that he had sent messages on August 19 and again on August 31. However, in both cases, the reminder was part of a larger message that

contained other topics, as per Council policy. Steve agreed, saying, "We cannot send a mass e-mail two days prior to every meeting, since people will stop subscribing and thus not get anything." He added, "On the other hand, all of you came tonight – kudos to you – and others phoned me to say they couldn't make it." He suggested to Norman that, if a larger message is about to go out, an upcoming meeting like this could be at the top as a bulleted item.

The District Chairman's Minute – "For the Good of the Order"

Pat thanked everyone for coming tonight and apologized for missing some meetings and events due to a recent change in his work responsibilities.

The District Director's Minute

Steve said that Pat is currently serving his fourth year as District Chair, which is unusual, since the bylaws call for a maximum of three 1-year terms. Pat's successor will be elected during the February 2015 District Annual Meeting. Steve explained that the Nominating Committee will meet prior to February in order to consider names, and anyone with suggestions should contact them.

One of tonight's handouts was a scanned business card from John Felice, who Steve said will chair the Nominating Committee. Other members will be Bob Lilley, Robert Deutsch, and Pat. The committee will also discuss possible vice-chairs, and Steve was particularly interested in having a Vice-Chair for Finance who would oversee the individual fund-raising campaigns, such as FOS and the golf outing.

Steve described Felice as a Bergen County Selectman who lives in River Edge with a "well-rounded Rolodex of names." One son is an Eagle Scout and another is on the way. Steve said that he mentioned to Felice that the Nominating Committee could use more people from Hudson County, and Felice immediately came up with three names.

**District Committee Meeting
September 4, 2014**

Attendance

Paul Adams

Greg Boyle

Mike Carp

Rich Curran

Warren Dressler

Ken Dutcher

Ed Ference

Ken Hesse

Norman Kasser

Steve Leonardi

Bob Lilley

Joe Mertens

Barry Messner

Bill Metts

Lillian Molnar

Tom Molnar

Dennis Ng

Ed Quinn

Pat Stamato

Biff Van Kleef