

**District Committee Meeting**  
**November 6, 2014**  
**One Bergen County Plaza**  
**Hackensack, NJ,**

**Key People**

Barry Goldman, District Commissioner  
Steve Leonardi, District Field Director

**Opening**

Barry Goldman led the Pledge and welcomed the attendees. Handouts were the agenda, an FOS report, a membership report, a second membership report with "goals," a summer camp attendance summary, and a report showing which NNJC units attended out-of-council summer camps.

**Membership - Unusual numbers in 2013 and 2014**

There were two membership report pages, one as-of tonight (Nov 6), and one as-of last week (Oct 31). Each page also had 2013 for comparison; that is, Nov 6, 2013 and Oct 31, 2013. Norman Kasser pointed out a strange jump that occurred in 2013: In one week, the grand total of Cubs, Scouts, and Venturers had increased by 217! Calling attention back to 2014, Barry pointed out that we had lost 7 Boy Scouts since last week, and said, "I know all 7 personally, since they were all in my troop." He explained that 5 had just turned 18 and joked, "I asked them not to turn 18, but they insisted."

**Membership - Numbers may have bottomed out**

Steve directed everyone's attention to where Oct 31, 2013 was compared to Oct 31, 2014, pointing out that both said "4410," and said, "This is the first month since this district was created that we have not gone down in membership." Barry Goldman then pointed out that the total number of Scout and Cub units was only one less than last year, to which Steve added that we lost 10 units but added 9, calling it "an uphill climb." Steve was very optimistic that Tiger Cubs had increased by 105 compared to 2013.

Steve said he hoped that Three Rivers might end the year with a plus and be able to "make a statement to the rest of the council." He allowed that things will get more difficult in December, but he was certain that some 160 youth application forms existed in unit leaders' homes that had not yet been turned in. In response to Norman's question, Steve said that a unit leader might tell him about having 15 forms but not being ready to turn them in yet. Steve concluded by saying that this year was much better than most with respect to forms coming in on time, possibly due to reminder phone calls and e-mails.

**Membership - Can a Committee Help the Situation?**

Biff van Kleef asked if TRD had an active Membership Committee, since no one was here tonight who might represent them. Norman recalled that Steve had asked DE Joe Mertens to take an active and strong role in membership matters, and Barry Messner said that a start-up Membership Committee had met, including Joe, and that it organized itself

during the past Roundtable, saying, "There are about six of us and we'll meet next week. Hopefully we'll have something to report next month." He agreed to send Barry Goldman a list of participants.

### **Membership - Fall Recruitment**

In response to Biff's question about spring and fall recruitment drives, Steve said that nearly every pack had scheduled something for September. But Steve went on to say that, although families might come to an open house and express interest, "It seems very rare that application forms are filled in and registration fees are collected on the night of the recruitment." He said that often forms are taken home for filling in, and often completed forms are collected by the unit leaders but not turned in quickly. Steve's conclusion was, "The key is for units to run multiple round-ups."

### **Membership - Setting Recruitment Goals**

Steve referred to a spreadsheet-style handout that listed every TRD unit (pack, troop, crew, post, ship) and explained the column labeled "Recruitment Goal." He said that he had researched each unit's past sign-ups for 2011, 2012, 2013, averaged them, and then added one more boy to give that unit its goal for 2014. Units that have already met or exceeded their goals were highlighted in green, with some lesser performers in yellow or even red.

Steve said, "We lost 10 or 11 units this year resulting in a loss of about 365 kids," and explained that the deficit could largely be made up if each unit recruited just one boy more than was their past average. He said, "The answer is a second recruitment," and then told of how one year he volunteered to head one town's Cub recruitment efforts. He said that he distributed flyers in schools five times, and each time, including the fifth, brought in more boys.

Steve said that having a membership team in place is important, "But they won't solve the membership issue. We need the Unit Commissioners to encourage second open house dates." Barry Messner liked the idea of using cards where one boy invites others to join. Norman liked a clever membership suggestion that was e-mailed to unit leaders prior to Halloween, proposing adding a "join the Scouts" flyer to each bag of candy. Barry Goldman wondered if Trail's End might create sampler bags of Scout popcorn.

### **Membership - Boy Scout Recruitment**

Steve scanned the Boy Scout troop portion of his spreadsheet where virtually every troop showed a 3-year average of zero, one, or two. But one standout was Bayonne Troop 25, not so much because of its average of four, but rather that they had signed up 16 new Scouts in 2014! He proposed that we ask them to run a "best practices" session to describe their success, possibly at a Roundtable. Barry Goldman suggested also asking North Arlington Troop 120 how they signed up 15 new Scouts.

Biff pointed out that kids won't join a troop if it just meets but has no program. Steve corrected that to say, "Kids will join if they're invited, but without a program they'll just

drop out." Warren told of a new requirement that will be introduced with next year's revised Webelos program. He said that Webelos, as before, will be required to visit a Scout troop, but they will then be asked to give an evaluation, such as, "Did the SPL open the meeting, or was it the Scoutmaster?" Ken Dutcher said that his Scoutmaster training sessions always includes a segment on recruiting that includes a video telling Scoutmasters to aim for 24-36 boys in order to have four patrols.

### **Finance - Family Friends of Scouting (FOS)**

Biff said, "We met our goal. We also had a meeting for presenters last week to make some changes." He explained that presenters will be asked to contact their 2014 units in order to schedule the next set of 2015 presentations. The hope is to have everything in place by the end of this year in order to free up Biff to focus on 15 "orange" units that somehow missed having presentations in 2014, as well as a dozen "red" units that I refuse to give up on." Biff was also concerned about units that pledged to make FOS donations but had not yet done so, and said that he was considering sending them a bill.

Biff said that the Council had run a 2015 kick-off meeting for presenters in October with another scheduled for later this month. The first two 2015 presentations will take place in December of this year. Biff said, "We need more presenters, such as unit leaders with a gift of gab." Barry Messner said that he had proposed asking Unit Commissioners to present to their own units but had gotten pushback from "old timers," who didn't think it was appropriate.

Steve said, "Last year we reached our Family FOS goal by the last week of December, but this year we met our goal three weeks ago and raised \$5,000 more than last year." Steve also pointed out that more families donated this year than last, saying, "We're leading the council with the percentage of family gifts." He added that DE Joe Mertens, "less than two months on the job" made a presentation that put us over the goal by raising \$1,500 from a pack in Kearny.

### **Finance - Leadership FOS and Rechartering the District**

Bob Lilley said, "We made our goal of \$15,000 and so we raised it to \$16,000 in 2015, which I think is obtainable." He then thanked the leaders for contributing and added that he will start asking for contributions next month.

Bob said he is also in charge of rechartering TRD as a district, which must be done in January. Thus he will shortly poll all the leaders to ensure that they renew their memberships on time, either with the district or with a home unit. He said, "We're telling our units that they have to recharter by Jan 15, and so I want the district charter in by Jan 15."

### **Finance - Upcoming Council Fund-Raiser Dinner**

Bob Lilley told about an upcoming council fund-raiser dinner that the TRD leadership may be able to attend for free. He explained that the council's Director of Development, Rick Garland, had previously run very successful dinners elsewhere, where tickets are

free, but guests are asked to pledge a minimum donation of \$300. Thus, if anyone has already donated \$300 or more to the 2015 Leadership or Family FOS campaigns, he may attend the dinner with no extra obligation. The hope is that each "free" attendee will bring friends who will agree to the \$300 donation. Also, a number of people have been tapped to be "table captains," charged with getting enough friends to fill a table. The captain will send his list to the council, which, in turn, will mail formal RSVP invitations.

Garland hopes to have Eli Manning as the guest speaker, and the location will be the exclusive Lexus Cub in the MetLife Stadium. A similar dinner that Garland organized in Indianapolis featuring Peyton Manning raised \$1.2 million, but this dinner's goal will be about \$250,000.

Steve was encouraged by Garland's plans. He said that he had seen successful Family FOS and Leadership FOS campaigns "crack their goals," but Community FOS campaigns mostly coming up short, including the three districts' numbers on tonight's handouts. He cited "our [past] lack of an organizational attack plan" versus the current "tried and proven" plan. Steve especially approved of using the elegant Lexus Club and pointed out that TRD will get Community FOS credit for any donors we bring in. He said that John Hughes had agreed to be a "Vice-Chair" for the event and that he and Bill had come up with various potential "table captains." He estimated that filling 11 tables would enable us to meet our Community FOS goal with "new money." Bob described the success of the council's recent sports dinner with Giant's star Jeff Feagles as the guest speaker and guessed that the upcoming dinner will be even more successful.

### **Finance - The 2014 Popcorn Sale Was Disappointing**

Barry Goldman read the numbers printed on tonight's agenda and said, "Popcorn sales are not doing very well. More people are selling, but they're selling less popcorn." The agenda's 2013 numbers showed that 82 units sold about \$321,000, while 2014 numbers showed that 100 units sold about \$286,000. Steve called this year's sale "soft and disappointing." Bob told of one pack that decided to sell first aid kits because they deemed popcorn to be too expensive and said, "They're not taking into consideration that popcorn is a fund-raiser for both the council and the unit, so there's a split on the profit, and that requires the price to go up."

Steve pointed out that Lenape Trails District had improved their sales, "So it's not a sign of the times." He proposed a follow-up meeting with all the Kernels to solicit ideas for 2015, saying, "I'm open to suggestions." Barry Goldman proposed asking the units with reduced sales what they thought was the cause. Steve looked at numbers for the TRD 2013 top sellers and saw that half had increased and half had decreased.

Barry Messner questioned running a popcorn sale early in the fall when units are "busy trying to get their act together." Norman proposed that deliveries came just as the holiday season started, but Steve simply said that he really didn't know. Steve added that popcorn sales represents a "big chunk" of the council's budget, but Biff said that a pie chart he saw

showed that FOS and popcorn are not nearly as important as "camps and program," which comprises 54% of the budget.

### **Finance - The 2014 Golf Classic Success**

Bob was pleased to report that "Nobody won the hole-in-one prize. Five feet was the closest." Bob joked that if anyone had won the \$10,000 prize, he would have insisted that half be donated to the FOS campaign, "Otherwise I won't sign the paper." Turning serious, Bob said that the turnout was light, but the weather was great, cocktails and dinner were good, and everyone had a good time. He said that the raffle prizes provided by local merchants were off due to their reduced sales caused by road construction.

Steve provided details: 32 golfers and a profit of about \$7,000 (the goal was \$10,000). He thanked Dave Wolf for organizing the event and Interra/ShopRite for agreeing to sponsor and "pretty much pay for the cost of the tournament," thus allowing all the green fees and other corporate sponsorships "to go right into Scouting." Steve liked the idea that money had come in from "outside sources so we're not going back to the same well."

### **Advancement - Scoutmaster Training (Nov 2)**

Ken said that 22 Scoutmasters and assistants attended and said, "This was the youngest crowd that I've seen in the past three years." Most were from Three Rivers, but Scouters also came from the other districts, and a few were from other councils. Four of them were women. Ken also had good words about using the Senior Center in Secaucus.

### **Advancement - Planning for a Star-to-Eagle Workshop**

Ken said that he and Ed Ference have started to plan a Star-to-Eagle "road show" for early 2015, saying that the last one they did was over two years ago. Ken made it clear that the session would be for unit leaders and advancement chairs, but not parents. He said that the session is based around the aims and methods of Scouting, whereas parents are just interested in how to get an Eagle project approved and over with.

Ken said that 2014 was "light" with respect to Eagle Boards of Review, saying, "It was quiet during the summer, a flurry in September, and I personally only have two scheduled." He said that other members of the Advancement Committee had also each conducted five or six boards. Ken doubted that the revised Eagle Workbook had any effect on this year's reduced numbers.

### **Advancement - Arrow of Light Award and Membership**

Barry Goldman asked if statistics exist showing relationships between Arrow of Light recipients and successful bridging into Boy Scouts. He said, "Maybe we should be looking into promoting the Arrow of Light award." Steve guessed that most of those Webelos do cross over, and Norman said that his experience was 100% do. On the other hand, Ken saw many boys join the Scout troop in the spring but fail to return in the fall, possibly as many as 30%. He guessed that they failed to attend Scout camp in the summer and thus "didn't stay connected." Norman referred back to Barry's proposal to push Arrow of Light in order to increase bridging and said, "My experience has been different. The

kids who press for Arrow of Light are self-selecting, and these are the same kids who self-select to get into the Scout troop and succeed there."

Barry Goldman recalled that the new Webelos program renamed "Webelos-2" to "Arrow of Light," and said, "So that is now the whole purpose of a Cub's last year." Warren Dressler added that the new program will put more stress on outdoor skills. He also said that he has some preliminary information obtained from a session at Philmont and offered to send it to anyone interested. Biff said that another session will be held at Sea Base. Warren said that new training materials for Webelos Den Leaders should be available at the same time as the revised handbooks and leader's guides, either during the spring or summer.

Everyone agreed when Steve suggested that a good Webelos Den Leader can make a big difference in how many boys will bridge successfully into a Scout troop, saying, "Maybe we should focus more on the role of the Webelos Den Leader." Barry Goldman told of one of his Den Leaders who bridged all five of his boys into the troop, with four becoming Eagle Scouts and the fifth in progress, and he contrasted that with another of his Den Leaders whose five are unlikely to join the troop.

### **A Report from the Northeast Region**

Earlier in the meeting Mike Carp handed Steve a handout from a Northeast Region meeting he had attended, and so Steve read aloud the six "Focus Points" that the region had set for itself in 2014/15:

- Growth in council Journey to Excellence scores
- Cub Scout growth
- Increased number of fiscally sustainable councils
- Increased number of youth-serving executives
- Increased youth retention
- Focus on diversity at ALL levels of the organization

Steve had some remarks. About "fiscally sustainable councils," he said that failure here is the reason that councils have to merge. About "number of youth-serving executives," he cited nationwide statistics showing that the more DEs a council has "on the ground" the more units there will be and the more kids will join those units. Warren was happy to point out that NNJC had recently become fiscally stable with no cash-flow shortage, and that all the districts now have three DEs (Steve remarked that Eric Chamberlin is doing "double-duty" as both DE and Field Service Director), and that we recently hired new staff. Biff said he objected to the council's plan to hire a Program Director next year, saying that the money would be better spent hiring another DE and/or District Director.

Referring to the Region's focus point about "increase youth retention," Steve said that NNJC has a "pretty decent number" with Boy Scouts around 77-78% and Cub Scouts also strong but less so, because the "parent tie isn't as strong." Warren said that the new program will try to overcome that, and he cited some changes planned for the "marketing message" to parents about the value of the time they might spend with their boys.

Mike asked about a Kindergarten program for Cubs discussed at the Regional meeting he attended. Steve explained that the "Lion Cub Program" tests had been run, were now completed, and that the program no longer exists. However, the council does have three Cub packs that have "chosen to partner with Kindergarten Learning for Life."

Referring to the Region's focus point about "diversity in the organization," Steve said that the council had received a matching grant a few years ago that allowed them to hire Rosa Urena to work on "urban outreach" with a fair amount of success. He said that Rosa is not constrained to work within any of the district boundaries (Norman joked that Rosa belonged to 'Recruiters without borders'), and that she had recently gotten a new Cub unit going in Union City, which added to the TRD membership numbers. Her next targets are Paterson and Newark. Steve called the program "new age for the Boy Scouts" and said that it has worked out very well.

In response to Norman's question, Mike said that he had attended the Northeast Region meeting as a member of the Religious Relationships Committee. He added that his committee was interested in contacting religious chartering organizations in order to promote some kind of faith-based movement. His committee also has an annual Religious Relationships Award that went to the Baltimore Area Council in 2014 and that NNJC might want to apply for. Steve responded that he would pass the paperwork on to Eric Chamberlin.

### **Activities - Upcoming Events**

Speaking for Activities Chair Mark Wrightington, Steve listed upcoming TRD events: November Merit Badge Fair and First Aid Rally, December Bowl-a-Thon, January Tiger Tumble and Klondike Derby. There was discussion about promoting "bring a friend" to the Tiger Tumble as a recruiting tool.

### **Camping - Need More Promotions**

Barry Goldman reviewed past successes in his pack and troop, where camp promotion talks directly resulted in sign-ups. Steve made it clear that TRD should create some kind of "structured approach to promotions." Subsequent discussion was about always combining a promotion with an FOS presentation (good idea), combining one with an Order of the Arrow election (probably not because parents rarely are present), and combining one with an OA Dance Team performance (don't bother because units rarely succeed in scheduling a performance.)

Steve pointed out that one drawback to a combined presentation is the time that will be taken out of a tight schedule, saying, "When I do an FOS presentation, the first thing the Scoutmaster or Cubmaster will ask is, 'How much time will you need?'" Steve said, "I might fib and say I will need 10 minutes, even though I know it will take 15. I just don't know about adding a camp promotion on top of that." He added, "I'd like to see how Tom and Lillian Molnar do their combined promotion -- maybe we should ask them to do a demo for us."

Barry Goldman told what his own camp promotions sound like. To parents he says, "Just think: Your kid will be away for a full week and you won't have to feed them, clean up after them, smell them..." To the kids he says, "Imagine being away from your mother for a whole week when you can do anything you want, get as dirty as you want, jump in the lake any time you want... And they all think that it's a great idea!"

Norman said, "I don't ask for promotions. In the springtime for the Cubs I'll get a few parents to stand up and tell the other parents how great camp is and how much their sons enjoyed it. At this point it's part of the culture: Our pack will go to summer camp. Our troop will go to summer camp. It's understood."

### **Camping - Excellent Videos Exists**

Steve said, "There are some *really great* youth-produced You Tube segments and videos." He asked, "Have you ever seen the one for Floodwood? Also Lewis." But Steve recognized the challenge in how to get parents and youth to look at them. He asked, "Do we bring it to the customer? Or do we tell the customer we have something they ought to see?" Thinking out loud, Steve considered buying 500 flash drives that could be mailed, saying that surely a kid would immediately plug it in to see what it contained. He said, "Floodwood has got to be the most fantastic best-kept secret even with a professional grade video." Barry Goldman suggested that Anthony Chirido could include a link on his e-mailed newsletter. Bob proposed a DVD could be provided to each troop's SPL. Steve suggested consulting with some youth such as OA officers. Barry Messner came up with an idea that people liked: He proposed a handout or a card listing links to social media sites that could be distributed during FOS presentations. Instead of cards, someone suggested refrigerator magnets.

### **Camping - The OA Used to Run Camp Promotion Breakfasts**

Mike Carp recalled how his old council used to invite Scoutmasters and SPLs to come to an OA pancake breakfast, where they would hear presentations made by various summer camp directors or staff members. He proposed expanding the idea to include Cubmasters and Den Leaders. Warren recalled a similar camping rollout that took place every fall in Clifton. Steve noted that DE Joe Mertens is also the Camp Director at Lewis and might be billed as a "featured speaker" when we invite Cub packs. He also suggested letting a projector run while the breakfast was in progress. Biff didn't think that Scouts needed the promotion as much as Cub packs, and proposed tying it into the District's Cub Fun Day.

### **Camping - Troops and Packs Attending Out-of-Council Summer Camps**

Barry Messner had a list of NNJC troops and packs that attended out-of-council summer camps, such as those run by Patriots' Path Council, Greater NY Councils, Cradle of Liberty Council, etc. Norman asked, "Will there be a push to get these units to attend our camps?" Steve pointed out that vice-versa is also true, saying, "The largest 'district' attending No-Be and Turrell is made up of Scouts from councils other than NNJC." (Warren recalled that No-Be was 60% out-of-council.) Barry Goldman thought the topic was worth pursuing, but not tonight.

### **Order of the Arrow Survey Coming Soon**

Warren said that the OA lodge has a survey that will be sent to all Scoutmasters who will be asked what they know about the OA, do they participate, what do they think, etc. The point will be to help the OA both grow and improve its program. He said that the survey is national, but our lodge got an early start.

### **A Book of Coupons from Dick's Sporting Goods**

Steve asked everyone to help themselves to a book of discount coupons provided by Dick's Sporting Goods. In addition to multiple identical pages of coupons, one lucky Scout can get the very first page offering \$10 off any purchase.

### **OA Trade-o-Ree (Mar 22) and the Scouter of the Year Dinner (Mar 26)**

Ed Quinn announced the 36th annual OA Trade-o-Ree on March 22 in Allendale, and also the annual Scouter of the Year Dinner on March 26 in Rochelle Park.

### **Upcoming Unit Rechartering**

Steve said that a rechartering packet is available for each unit, starting at the upcoming Roundtable, then possibly distributed by the Assistant District Commissioners, and, if those don't work, to be mailed. He said that the website for unit rechartering will come online on December 1. All TRD units must recharter by Jan 15 while other districts have different deadline dates.

**District Committee Meeting  
November 6, 2014**

**Attendance**

Mike Carp  
Kevin Dolce  
Warren Dressler  
Ken Dutcher  
Barry Goldman  
Norman Kasser  
Steve Leonardi  
Bob Lilley  
Barry Messner  
Bill Metts  
Ed Quinn  
Biff Van Kleef