

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

Key People

Barry Goldman, District Commissioner
Steve Leonardi, District Field Director

Later in the meeting

Ken Dutcher accepted the position of Interim District Chairman

Opening and Agenda

Paul Adams led the Pledge. Copies of the agenda were handed out along with reports about membership, popcorn sales, and a spreadsheet listing all district units and their recruiting goals.

Membership - Problem with Unit Leaders Not Turning in Applications (1)

Barry Goldman posed the problem of how to deal with a unit leader holding back a new youth application, saying, in effect, "It's so close to rechartering time, why bother?" Barry pointed out that the main reason for getting the boy registered is to make sure he is covered by Scout secondary insurance (this triggered some discussion about whether a "grace period" exists and how long it is). Barry asked for ideas on how to solve the problem.

Membership - Review of the Recruiting Goals Spreadsheet

Bob Lilley said that he had past success with simple phone calls, so Steve asked people present if they would please contact some Cub packs that had not turned in any application forms since September. However, Steve first directed attention to the "Recruiting Goals" spreadsheet handout. He started with the example of Hackensack Pack 5, rendered in green, "Because they excelled in recruiting with 22 new members versus their past average of 8."

Steve was really please with the "green" entries, because Three Rivers was poised "for the first time in many years to say, 'We have more kids in Cub Scouting than last year!' -- But we're not there yet." He pointed out that, while program and finance are important, it's all about membership, "And the other stuff will come along with it." He then named the 8 Cub packs that so far had zero recruitment.

Steve was also concerned about packs that had turned in some applications, but were running way below what they had done in past years, "But it's always a red flag when you're not getting communications to find out what the reason is." He then listed an additional 13 packs. Barry Goldman asked for clarification about one of the 13, saying, "They recruited 8 new kids so far. What's the problem?" Steve responded by noting that each year for the past three that pack had averaged 10 new Cubs, but this year they only

had 8. He said, "It's a trap that we don't want to fall in. If we're satisfied just doing what we used to do, then we'll never move forward."

Steve repeated that we were very close to ending the year with a positive number, being just 120 Cubs short. He pointed out that if each of our 79 packs recruited just two more kids... Steve said, "Sometimes we say that the size of our district is our greatest challenge, but it's also our greatest resource because of the depth of our membership."

Membership - "Save a Scout"

Paul asked if we made any effort to find out why individual boys drop out. Steve said that there exists a "Save-a-Scout" campaign, and "It's something that our fledgling Membership Committee might be charged to do around recharter time." Barry Goldman pointed out that one page of the online rechartering system insists that the unit leader specify a reason code for each youth being dropped off the roster. Steve said, "The trouble is that there's nothing beyond that. And anyway it's real purpose is to make unit leaders give some thought to each dropped boy." Steve gave examples of bad reasons: "Johnny owes \$20" or "I haven't seen Johnny for two months."

Paul asked, "What if the Council were to send a letter to the family?" Barry responded that such a letter would likely be far too late, since rechartering takes place in January, and the boy in question probably dropped out six months prior. He said, "In my opinion, a letter like that should go out in September." When Paul wondered why rechartering takes place in January instead of September, Barry assured him that all unit leaders would insist that September is far too early. However, Barry had a counter-suggestion: Unit Leaders should start contacting boys in August to ensure that they are coming back and take the opportunity to find out why not. But he concluded, "That's a really difficult thing to do."

Membership - Problem with Unit Leaders Not Turning in Applications (2)

Biff Van Kleef returned to the problem of unit leaders not turning in applications. He said that when he was a Cubmaster running a recruitment, "9 out of 10 times" a DE or other professional was present and made sure to take the applications back to the office with him. Barry Goldman saw the point but noted that we have 150 units but only a handful of professionals. Steve told of a recruitment that he attended where "The Cubmaster wouldn't let me touch the applications!" He also had a second more recent instance where the lady Cubmaster didn't let him take the applications -- in fact he doubted that they were ever sent into the office.

Barry Goldman again presented the idea that insurance and potential liability should be used as goads to ensure both on-time youth applications and on-time unit rechartering. He said, "If they think that they don't have to turn in the paperwork, they won't. So we want them to believe that there's a very short grace period." Biff proposed a letter from the Scout Exec directly to the chartered partner Executive Officer of a lapsed unit "So he knows that his boys are no longer covered by Scout liability insurance." Steve was not adverse to the idea, but said that Biff had proposed a council-type decision, whereas this meeting ought to stick with district issues.

When Ken Dutcher asked how many units' recharter papers were "seriously past due in early 2014," He was surprised when Steve estimated 30%. Ken said that Biff's proposed letter from the Scout Exec "would shorten the window," and Biff felt that an "FYI" letter about liability sent now might have the same effect. Ken liked the idea but proposed delaying the letter until January. He also proposed drafting the letter now and getting it approved and "teed up" so that it would be immediately ready for mailing when the time came. He said, "The letter doesn't have to be threatening, just factual."

Membership - When Webelos Fail to Join Boy Scouts

Rich Curran told of a program in his town where direct contact is made to any aged Webelos who doesn't register with a Scout troop. He said, "We give the list to the Senior Patrol Leaders who use boy-to-boy contact to find out why they didn't join."

Membership - Why Not Online Applications for New Youth?

Paul asked why there doesn't exist an online system for new boys to register with a unit. There was back-and-forth discussion about how to get the parent's signatures and how to get the registration fee, but Steve cut through it all when he said, "There's really no problem getting the application form to the council office. After all, we have three people willing 24/7 to travel to the ends of the earth to pick up one application. We have a drop box at my house that people use. We get applications by e-mail and fax and dropped at the council office. It's a behavioral problem. The behavior that has to change is saving up forms as well as just plain procrastination." Steve said, "The thought process that has to be instilled is, 'Application is filled out = one week to get it to the office' otherwise the boy is not a member of that unit and he is not covered by insurance."

Membership - Why Delay?

Lillian Molnar referred back to Steve's story about the lady Cubmaster who refused to let him have her new application forms and asked Steve, "Why not?" Steve got a laugh when he instead turned to Barry Goldman and asked, "The other night, why didn't you let me take *your* new application forms?" Barry explained that he wanted to wait for the parents' checks to clear so that he himself would not be liable in case of a bounced check.

Bob Lilley had a different explanation having to do with the annual \$29 registration fee. He suggested a Cubmaster signing up a boy in September and accepting \$29 from the parents at the time. If he waits until January to register the boy, then he has the exact amount needed to pay for the next 12 months in 2015. On the other hand, if he registers the boy in September, a portion of the \$29 will have been spent and there won't be enough to cover all of 2015. Bob said, "In September the Cubmaster should have asked for a partial payment" [*Editor's note: \$12.10*] Barry said that his pack solves the problem by asking for \$29 plus \$5 extra, knowing that it's really not enough to cover the extra five months.

Barry said, "We have to let the units know that there are consequences," and said that Cubmasters are well aware of what the IRS will do if they don't file taxes by April 15 but

likely they don't know the consequences for not registering their new Cubs on time. He allowed that it's very rare for an unregistered boy to be injured on an outing, but, "They don't know until it happens, and they do find out, and they're in big trouble." Barry added, "Of course only one Cubmaster may have found out the consequences, while the other 70 still don't know." Barry's recommendation was to provide a written warning, such as "Must be turned in by... Otherwise..."

In response to Lillian's question, Bob said that a table of pro-rated registration fees is provided with each set of rechartering papers. Sal pointed out that each youth application form also has a table of pro-rated amounts, but that it's not helpful due to our council's \$5 insurance surcharge. Tom Molnar added that a Cubmaster should charge a Webelos the full \$29 even though he will bridge out of the pack in just a few months, saying, "When the boy transfers and becomes a Scout, he will already be covered for the rest of the year - it all comes out in the wash."

Steve said, "We have to be aware that delays in turning in application forms is a systemic problem in our district. Maybe we should do consultations with Cubmasters during the course of the year." Barry Goldman asked if the topic was covered during training. Ken said that it is one of the modules discussed during his Scoutmaster sessions, but Biff said, "For Cubmasters, there's nothing more boring than paperwork. They think that it's unimportant." Biff added, "There are Cubmasters who are fully trained but still don't turn in their applications."

Paul asked, "What's the liability of a Cubmaster of an injured boy who knowingly didn't turn in the application form?" His question launched a short discussion by Steve and Biff and Barry, but in fact no clear-cut answer came out of the discussion.

Membership - Follow-Up Needed

Steve said that the previous discussion showed the need for two things: First, we should ask the newly formed Membership Committee to organize a "Save-a-Scout" campaign. Second, we should prepare a letter now that can be sent to any chartered partner that fails to recharter on time.

Tom asked Steve for a list of "delinquent units" when the time comes. Barry Goldman instead proposed giving the ADCs and UCs (Assistant District Commissioners and Unit Commissioners) a weekly status report showing which units rechartered and which had not yet done so. Steve pointed to everyone's "Recruiting Goals" spreadsheet and proposed adding an extra column for "recharter turned in" and a second column called "paperwork is defective." ADCs and UCs will receive a copy weekly, starting on Jan 7.

Membership - Side Discussion about Minimum Size Units

Paul asked about the minimum number of youth and adults needed to make a unit "legal." Steve started with the Institutional Head, the Chartered Organization Rep, and the Committee Chair, explaining that it's okay for one person to fill all three roles. For a Cub pack there must be a Cubmaster, at least one Den Leader, and two committee members.

Thus there are seven positions to fill, but it can be done with five adults. The unit also needs five youth (with exceptions). A Boy Scout troop is the same but without the Den Leader, thus six positions that can be filled with four adults. Steve said that the youth exceptions are the "Lone Scout" program and LDS (Mormon) units.

Changes to the TRD "Administrative Structure"

Steve said that the Nominating Committee is chaired by John Felice, with members Mike Saudino, Pat Sweeny, and Bob Lilley. In response to Biff's question, Steve said that all of Bergen County is represented on the committee, but Hudson County is not, and John Felice is trying to fill that "hole." At a prior meeting they discussed who might replace Pat Stamato as District Chair, names for Vice-Chairs, and the "long list" making up the Members-at-Large slate.

Steve said that the Nominating Committee intends to change the "administrative structure" of the District Committee by altering the job descriptions of the vice-chairs. In place of the previous titles of "Program" and "Finance," instead there will now be a "Vice-Chair for Bergen County" and a "Vice-Chair for Hudson County." It will be up to the new District Chair to decide how to administer program and finance.

Mark Wrightington was clearly unhappy with how this change was being handled (although not necessarily with the change itself). He asked, "If you're going to change the structure of the District Committee, shouldn't there be some sort of meeting with the current committee? Usually a body votes on the way they're made up." Bob and Steve both invited Mark to sit in on the next Nominating Committee meeting, with Steve saying, "They're not a bunch a people sitting in a back room. These are all good people on the committee. Their sole interest is the interest of the district and of the Boy Scouts." Bob explained that the change will not affect how the district will be run. Instead the point is to get "more community involvement by non-Scouters -- and possibly more money."

Mark concluded. "I get all that. But my opinion is that the Nominating Committee should have made a recommendation and that the rest of the District Committee should have been given a chance to discuss it and vote on it." Steve invited Mark to contact John Felice directly and said, "His name has been thrown out here for many meetings."

In response to Biff's question about vice-chairs, Steve said that there is no fixed number or fixed roles. The new roles for vice-chairs resulted from discussions about "the best way to administratively serve the interests of Hudson County and Bergen County, seeing that what we had in the past was not successful." He added, "The change is also intended to give more depth of support to the overall District Chair."

Ken Dutcher Will be Interim Chair to Replace Pat Stamato

Steve explained that TRD District Chair Pat Stamato had new responsibilities with his day job that prevented him from fulfilling his duties as Chair. As a result, Pat agreed to step down and to allow a new interim Chair to fill in for the next two months; that is, until the

upcoming District Annual Meeting in February. Steve introduced Ken to the district members after telling about conversations with Pat, with Council President Joe Healy, and with the TRD Nominating Committee, who all approved the choice. Steve said, "We all know Ken and his dedication to Scouting. His administrative skills are top notch." Steve cautioned that Ken's interim chairmanship is "Not intended to be a walk-in to become the district Chairperson in 2015."

Ken recognized that he will hold the position for just 2 months, but he insisted that he will try to put that limited time to good use. He recalled the very first meetings of the newly constituted "Eastern District," the excitement of something new and good starting, and, most of all, how those first meetings were "packed." He asked, "What happened to all those happy campers? Without looking backwards, what can I do to try to pull that back?" He characterized district meetings as, "We talk about things, but I'm not sure what actually gets done."

Ken listed some things that the district does well, such as program, training, and Boy Scout advancement (maybe not so well with Cub advancement). However he also noted some "challenges," such as a recent Scoutmaster training in Secaucus where only one Scouter out of the 22 attendees was local to Secaucus. Ken pointed out that Mark Wrightington had also been disappointed with local turnout from some events he ran in Hudson County. He said, "We've got to figure that out, but I'm not going to give up."

Ken also told about the Scoutmaster training he received, and how it was done without regard to the sponsoring district, saying, "Who cared about which district it was? It kept me in the program as an adult." Ken said he has contact with Scouters in other councils with ideas about "what's right." He said, "I don't care about what's right, I care about what works." He therefore intends to speak with lots of Scouters to ask about what they do in order to find out what works.

Ken concluded, "I like to have fun, so this won't be a 'job.' But we should have two or three times the number of people here, even if they're not here physically. We need more of you."

Finance - Leadership FOS

Bob got applause when he said that we had exceeded our Leadership FOS goal by raising \$16,661 against a goal of \$15,000. As a result, TRD agreed to give itself a new 2015 goal of \$16,000, which, Bob pointed out, is less than we raised last year. Bob had some other figures to pass on. He said that the NNJC paid professionals had already raised some \$22,000 of which the "TRD professional team" had contributed over \$4,100. Steve added, "Contrary to popular belief, we are *not* told how much to contribute."

Finance - When There's a Choice Between Leadership FOS and Family FOS

For Scouters registered with both TRD and their home troop or pack, Steve encouraged them to assign their FOS contribution to TRD, saying, "There are 4000 families who might contribute to the Family FOS campaign, which is a much a bigger pool than the

Leadership campaign has to draw on." He said that solicitations will be mailed out shortly, and this year's mailing will include merit badge counselors, "a group we never even asked in the past."

Steve said, "We're the leaders of the district, and we're trying to lead by example." Thus, when Steve visits a unit and makes a Family FOS presentation, he is able to truthfully say, "Join me in supporting Scouting."

Finance - Fund-Raiser Sports Dinner (Apr 21)

Bob described the council's upcoming fundraiser sports dinner, featuring Eli Manning and taking place at the Lexus Club within the meadowlands MetLife Stadium, and said, "The tickets for the dinner will cost..." until Steve interrupted with, "There are no tickets!" Bob corrected himself and said, "You'll receive a written invitation with your name on it. Invitations will go out to anyone who donated \$300 or more to Leadership-FOS or Family-FOS -- without the expectation that you will donate anything additional at the dinner." Steve said that some people who currently give \$500 to the Family-FOS campaign will be encouraged to add an extra \$100 in order to receive a second invitation.

Steve told how various people had volunteered to act as "vice-chairs" or as "table captains," whose job will be to put together a table of 7-10 people and gave John Hughes of Bayonne and Peter Hilaris of Tenafly as examples. Because John and Peter agreed to be part of the Three Rivers effort, any money they bring in will be credited to the TRD Community-FOS campaign. Steve said, "Please let me or Biff know if you can think of anyone else who might make a good table captain."

Bob said that the dinner was put together by the council's Director of Development, Rick Garland, who hopes to raise \$250,000. When he was in Indianapolis, Garland raised \$1.2 million at a similar event, with additional successes in Seattle and Portland, Maine.

Three Rivers District to be Rechartered for 2015

Bob said that he is also in charge of submitting the paperwork needed to recharter TRD for 2015, and that he intends to do so by the January 15 deadline, saying, "We're asking units to recharter on time so as to avoid becoming 'lapsed' -- I want my charter in on time as well. I want us to lead by example." As a result, Bob said that each TRD member must inform him if he has a primary registration with a troop or pack, or if his primary registration is with TRD.

Financial - Family FOS Presentations in 2015

Biff asked everyone present connected with a troop or pack to give him a date in 2015 when an FOS presentation will be made, saying that eight had already contacted him for 2015 and one more for December 2014. For those connected, he asked for a response this week. For Unit Commissioners, he asked for responses next week. Lillian had her doubts, saying that, although units like to schedule an FOS presentation at the same time as a Boy Scout Court of Honor or Cub Scout award ceremony, in her experience many units have no idea when those ceremonies will actually take place. Biff said he is willing to accept a

best-guess date that will show up color-coded on his spreadsheet calendar and said, "I won't assign a presenter until the date is in green."

Biff also said that he asked all his presenters from last year to schedule as many repeat presentations in 2015 as possible. This will give Biff more time to concentrate on units that had no presentation in 2014 (especially ones who gave in the past), as well as Venture crews and LDS units.

Biff said that an FOS Presenter training session will take place at 7:30 PM during the upcoming District Roundtable. As something new, Biff said that Tom Molnar will re-enact his usual FOS presentation. In response to Norman's question, Lillian said she is willing to join Tom so that they can jointly demonstrate how to do a combined FOS plus camp promotion, in what they call their "dog-and-pony show."

Biff said that TRD's 2015 goal for Family-FOS was raised to \$90,000, thanks to the success in 2014. Steve said that the new goal is only \$5,000 above last year's and added that he was very optimistic due to discovering one more "Bloomberg employee." He explained, "If you know anyone who works for one of the Bloomberg companies -- and there are a bunch of them -- the Bloomberg Foundation will donate \$5,000 per employee if that employee logs 50 hours of public service," and told of a Cubmaster in Fair Lawn who has taken advantage of the offer for the past five years. *[Editor's note: Michael Bloomberg is an Eagle Scout who has made major donations to the Scouts over the years.]*

Activities - Four Upcoming Events

Mark said that the December 29 Bowl-a-Thon will take place in Montvale, Elmwood Park, and Union City, explaining that the unusual Monday date was probably the best choice due to the way that Christmas falls this year. January 17 will have the Tiger Tumble in Palisades Park, and January 24 will have the Klondike Derby at Campgaw Mountain in Mahwah.

Mark said that the council had asked each of the three districts to run some kind of Cub event that would encourage attendance at Cub Summer camp. Steve said that TRD's event was originally set for September 2014 at No-Be, but was postponed to June 2015 to take place along with the council's June 6-7 Cub Scout Family Overnight at Lewis. Mark and Steve both thought scheduling two events at the same time was a bad idea, and Steve asked Mark to contact Eric Chamberlin at the council office to discuss it.

Camping - Summary of 2014

Due to time constraints, Barry Messner simply summarized summer camp attendance during 2014 as "about the same as they were for 2013, with Cub camping up by just a little bit." However, Barry added that there was discussion about how to set up some kind of a Cub day camp in Hudson County, "Because there were big issues with bussing."

Awards

Rich Curran made these announcements:

- o The Scouter of the Year award will be handled by Ed Quinn with a ceremony at the American Legion Hall in Rochelle Park on March 26, cost \$25. Ed said that he had already received two nominations.
- o The District Award of Merit (DAM) awards will be handled by Rich with a ceremony at the Paramus Elks Cub on April 19. cost \$30.
- o Leader Training Awards will be made at the same event as the DAM. Rich said that he had already received two applications from the council office.
- o Silver Beaver nominations are due into the council office by the end of January.

Communications - Program Helps no Longer Part of the TRD Newsletter

Norman explained that, in the past, the monthly newsletters he broadcasts always contained an article or two about program helps; that is, information about events or offerings that unit leaders can make use of in order to make their meetings or outings more interesting. He said, "My purpose has always been to increase membership and retention." However, he said that he had been instructed by the NNJC Marketing Committee to publicize only offerings by NNJC "Program Partners" -- and of course any event sponsored by NNJC or its districts, units, etc.

As examples, Norman said he may publicize "Scout Day with the NJ Jackals," but not "Scout Day with West Point Football." He may publicize "Scout Overnight on the Battleship NJ," but not "Scout Overnight at the NJ Aquarium." Also missing will be Scout-friendly locations that offer help with merit badges and belt loops, such as the Meadowlands Environmental Center or Sterling Hill Mines. In response to Barry Goldman's question, Norman said that NNJC Program Partners are willing to pay the Council money each year for the privilege of being publicized, whereas others who might have appeared in previous newsletters were receiving free publicity.

Norman said, "I tried to make the case to the Marketing Committee that my articles were about membership, while their concern is about finance, but surely these don't have to be in conflict and that there must be a middle ground. I provided a list of third-party offerings that appeared in past newsletters and asked them if there were any offerings on the list that might still be acceptable. I was hoping they would give an OK to the Catholic Committee on Scouting or to the Patriots' Path Council or the National Park Service. But their response was that they wanted to have a "consistent" policy of no free publicity for third party offerings.

When Rich asked how much a Program Partner might pay, Norman read from one of his e-mails that said, "We have companies paying \$2,000+ for advertisements. We cannot make one pay and let others go for free... Why buy the cow when you can get the milk for free?" In response to Biff's question, Norman said that his primary contact was Anthony Chirido, but one e-mail came from Dave Verbraska who said, "I completely agree with [Anthony's] approach and logic here."

Steve took the floor to explain that he can see "both sides" of the issue, saying the he might get "three calls each month" from third party vendors who want to take advantage of the Scout mailing list. "They see the Boy Scout pool as a resource of money for their activities." As an example, he described a Cub meeting he recently attended where Cubs were entertained by "Mad Science of Bergen County" who charged (he guessed) \$300. Steve repeated, "I can see both sides, and I think that it's a debate that should keep on going."

Tom Molnar proposed an exception for non-profits, but Steve explained that the test wasn't for-profit versus non-profit, but rather, does the provider charge for his service. Steve assured Tom that he understood the point well, since he used to be chairman of the NJ Tall Ships non-profit.

Steve agreed with the suggestion that Barry Goldman and Ken Dutcher should represent the leadership of the Three Rivers District and pursue the topic with Scout Exec Steve Gray, saying, "It may not go 'our way,' but your voice will be heard."

**District Committee Meeting
December 4, 2014**

Attendance

Paul Adams

Sal Bellomo

Rich Curran

Warren Dressler

Ken Dutcher

Barry Goldman

Norman Kasser

Steve Leonardi

Bob Lilley

Barry Messner

Bill Metts

Lillian Molnar

Tom Molnar

Ed Quinn

Biff Van Kleef

Mark Wrightington