

**District Committee Meeting
October 6, 2011
One Bergen County Plaza
Hackensack, NJ,**

Key People

Pat Stamato, District Chair
Robert Deutsch, District Vice-Chair for Development
Leslie Sonkin, District Vice-Chair for Program
Sal Bellomo, District Commissioner
Lex Leonard, District Executive
Ian Meades, District Executive
See attachment for other attendees

Gateway Camporee Follow-up (Sep 16-18)

Pat thanked the organizers of the Gateway Camporee, Peter Hilaris, Dennis Ng, and Barry Messner, saying, "I thought it went pretty well, and I had a great time. You guys did a great job." He also thanked Ron Geschwinder for cooking for the staff.

Webelos Conservation Weekend Follow-up (Sep 30-Oct 2)

Pat thanked Ken Hesse for organizing the event, saying, "It was a success, and it gives us something to build upon in the future." Ken gave numbers: 134 total, of which 91 were youth consisting of 25 Boy Scouts and close to 70 Cubs. Ken said that his previous high was 120 when he ran similar events in the past.

Ken said that he would like next year's event to take place in June, when "You don't have as much bombarding you in the beginning of the year." He was also concerned that Webelos attendees were forced to choose between his weekend and the Gateway Camporee.

Communications Problems

Leslie was concerned that a lot of Scout leaders are not receiving information about events, but said, "I don't know why that is -- we need to reach more leaders." She asked Bob Hastings for a copy of the sign-up sheet from the September Roundtable. He agreed and said that he will also send it to the Training Committee, since attendance at Roundtables and Pow Wows counts toward earning adult knot awards. (See below for more discussion about problems with communications.)

Fund Raisers and District Goals

Pat said that he had recently organized a successful fund-raiser dinner in Jersey City with another planned for lower Bergen County followed by a third in upper Bergen. His goal is to do six. He said, "We're trying to get the business community involved in Scouting." He said that the Jersey City dinner had raised \$4,000 with money still coming in, so the total could go as high as \$7,000.

In response to Biff Van Kleef's question, Pat said that the money raised will be credited toward our district's fund-raising goal, which started a lengthy discussion about meeting district goals and about earning the "Quality District Award" (now called the "Journey to Excellence Award"). Since the award is measured from January through December, Pat guessed that the three new districts would simply forget about 2011, and start fresh aiming for an award in 2012. DE Ian Meades said that new district fund-raising goals will be decided on during the Council's annual business meeting in February.

The "Top of Mind" List

Rob Deutsch wrote down suggestions for topics that attendees wanted to have discussed tonight.

No Break-Out Tonight

There was general agreement when Pat suggested not having the various committees break out into discussion groups. This was partly due to the small size of the meeting room.

Membership - A New Cub Pack Proposed for Cliffside

Neither Membership Chair was present tonight to make a report, so Leslie invited a general discussion starting with Mark Wrightington. Mark said that a school in Cliffside runs a lunch time program for Girl Scouts, and the principal asked a teacher to see about starting a Cub pack as well. Ian responded that we just need someone willing to run it, ideally one of the teachers, saying, "I don't know who here would be willing to take his lunch break to run a Cub meeting." Leslie really liked the idea, saying, "Cliffside has been so hard to get into." She asked Ian to contact the principal to find out if the school has a teacher willing to do it.

Membership - Lex Needs Help

Norman Kasser said to Ian, "Tell the principal that the teacher will have to take training, but that the Scouts have really good facilities for making that happen. Lex had to do that in Union City." Lex responded by saying that the Union City pack was currently in trouble, and that it really needs someone with experience willing to come in to assist. He said he has a second pack in Jersey City with a similar problem. Leslie said, "If anyone can donate time to help out with a meeting, maybe we can do it as a round-robin..."

Membership - Cub Recruiting Has Fallen Off

Ian urged the Cub leaders present to do more recruiting. He said that the Council had received so far about 60 applications, which he called "okay, but..." Ian said that the lack of recruiting drives was noticeable. He guessed that DEs who would otherwise have urged recruitment may have gotten sidetracked by the reallocation. He pointed out that even November is a good month to recruit, because fall sports will be wrapping up.

Membership - Problems Caused by Flooding

Bob Hastings told Ian that his pack in Lodi lost its meeting place and will have to move to an alternate location. He asked Ian if any other packs had similar problems. Ian said

that he had heard of others and said, "The Council has resources. We ought to be able to come up with, say, a firehouse. But it may not be in their town and maybe they'll have to drive to the next town over." Returning back to the subject of recruitments, Ian said that the Council has the resources, the flyers, the posters, and the people that can assist, but the packs themselves have to schedule them.

Membership - The "BeAScout" website

Ian asked people to raise hands if they were familiar with the "BeAScout" website, where a potential Scout or Cub can enter a zip code and get locations and contact information for nearby units. Although many hands were raised, the consensus was that the site received very little publicity and had very little public awareness. Ken Hesse said that he saw lots of roadside signs in Sussex County, but few in Bergen. Sal said that he gets phone calls asking him where to find a unit and suggested placing ads on cable TV public access channels. Another suggestion was for the Council to place reminders in local newspapers. Another suggestion was that any time a unit gets a write-up in a local paper, "BeAScout" should be mentioned.

Membership - Why Didn't We Hear From the Council?

Barry Messner asked Ian why the Council had been so silent about the need to start recruiting, saying, "During the summer and early fall we've really seen very little. In August we [Unit Commissioners] should have gotten a reminder to tell our units about fall recruitment in September." Ken Hesse agreed, saying that he is on the mailing list of the Jersey Shore Council had received many reminders from them. Ian said "I really don't have a good excuse. A lot of us have summer camp assignments, so I guess that communications should have been assigned to someone at the office without such a responsibility." Biff guessed that Barry's complaint would be best addressed by Kenyon Sandy at the Council office.

Membership - Recruiting from Cub Camp

Leslie asked Ian if the Cub camps give recruitment flyers to their campers. Ian was confused about the question, saying, "A boy has to be registered in order to attend." Leslie clarified by saying that some parents do a last-minute registration just to take advantage of our relatively cheap camp fee, and she wondered if anyone followed up later to see if those boys became active. Ian responded, "Our system flags people who are not registered, and I take it upon myself to see which pack they've joined and if they're still continuing."

Membership - Invitation Cards

Ian said that he has a supply of business-size invitation cards that can be handed out to potential Cubs, Scouts, or Venturers. He said that he brought some to the last Roundtable and will bring them to the next one. Bob Hastings asked him to scan one and e-mail it prior to the upcoming Roundtable. Pat asked Ian to set up a table at each Roundtable with a supply of recruiting-type materials.

Communications - Using Facebook

Gerry Beatty said that the Council has a Facebook page that she called "cool and informative," but she said that it's "general and not specific, such as 'there's a meeting tonight.'" Leslie said that our district also has a Facebook page that should contain those kind of specifics, and she apologized for not posting tonight's meeting. Ian said, "We have a new hire in the office, and she has Facebook as one of her responsibilities."

Popcorn Report

Lillian Molnar said, "There's really not much to report," explaining that she will have better information when units place their Take-Orders on Oct 30. Pat asked about a report from DD Steve Leonardi that the number of orders was up. Lillian guessed that Pat had heard about orders for Show-n-Sell, but she dismissed the number as "deceiving." Mark agreed, saying that units frequently order more for Show-n-Sell than they can handle, knowing that they can return the extras or that they can keep them and apply them against Take-Order forms. Lillian said that last year's Show-n-Sell went up but Take-Orders went down by the same amount, ending up with no change from the previous year.

Training - Council Website

Leslie said that Mary Kay Tokar could not attend this meeting due to a conflict. Ian said that the Council website has a "Training" calendar, but "you won't find anything, but I'm working with Mike Cowan to fix that." *[Editor's note: The Council's Training calendar is currently populated with good information.]* Ian then listed three upcoming Council-sponsored weekend outdoor sessions for adult leaders.

Training - For Boy Scout SPLs and Patrol Leaders

Ken Dutcher described a training session he is running for Boy Scout junior leaders: SPLs and PLs. It will take three separate evenings, following the military method of "know, be, do." The dates will be Oct 13, 20, 27, but the location will become firm later tonight. He described the course as a prerequisite for the week-long NYLT training. Ken said that word-of-mouth had resulted in 20 sign-ups already, leaving space for perhaps five more boys. He said that he will look into running the same course in June as a weekend at Camp Lewis. In response to Norman's question, Ken said that teaching boys how to motivate other boys is just "a small part of what we do."

Advancement - Many Eagle Projects in the Works

Speaking for the Advancement Committee, Ken Dutcher said, "We're all incredibly busy. We're drinking from the fire hose. Summer was quiet, but now boys are coming out in waves looking for Eagle Boards or project approvals." Ken said that he is currently handling 17 or 18 applications. He explained how the Committee circulates project approvals among themselves with a commitment to respond within 48 hours. He described the process as being useful and going smoothly. About the process, Ken said, "It helps us to be consistent in what an Eagle project consists of -- where we set the bar."

Camping - John Beatty's New Position

John said, "I'm the new Boy Scout Camping Director." He explained that his job is to "get the word out to help bring in people." He said that he is partnered with Mark Jenkins at

Camp No-Be-Bo-Sco, and that they are already starting to put the word out about camp. John said that he wants to "beef up" both Scout and Cub camps, by which he meant more boys signing up, which in turn means more recruiting.

Camping - A Complaint about How Camp Discounts are Handled

Rob Deutsch told Ian that the Council had announced a new discount policy two years ago without taking into account the problem it caused for units trying to administer the payments. He said, "You've discounted camp without informing the troops." *[Editor's note: Rob gave the example of a Scout getting a 2nd-week discount by attending a week at No-Be followed by a week at Floodwood. However, the Council also discounts a Scout going for any kind of 2nd week, including at the same camp, or even a week at Philmont or the National Jamboree.]* Rob explained that he had collected full-fee money from his families and forwarded it all to the Council office. But when he found that some families were entitled to a discount, he said that "It took me 10 months to get my discount back! You've left the troops to administer these discounts without any procedure. It's a nightmare." Leslie told John Beatty to pay attention to this complaint, saying, "That's the kind of thing you can bring up during your committee meetings."

Camping - A Second Complaint -- Handling Paulsen Camperships

Mike Carp described how the Paulsen Fund of North Bergen is willing to give camperships to Scouts living in selected North Hudson ZIP code areas, explaining that their policy is to send a check to the Council at the end of the summer. Mike related a case where a Scout sent his camp fee to the Council before attending, and then Paulsen sent a second camp fee to the Council later on. Mike said, "The boy never actually got his money back, but he did receive a credit towards attending camp the following year." Norman said, "When I publicized the Paulsen camperships in past years, I told unit leaders that boys should not submit a fee in advance. Instead they should bring a copy of the award letter their family received from Paulsen, give it to the Camp Director, and say, 'I don't have to pay. Paulsen's going to pay for me.'"

Camping - A Compliment

Biff said, "The Council did something new. During the last camp week in 2011, they published the camp fees and dates for 2012. That's a plus!" Biff continued, "Now, if we could just get the damn Camp Cards and their discounts again, and do it on time... Do you know what I'm talking about?" Ian said, "I don't know if they are coming out again," and suggested that Pat should raise the topic the next time he speaks with Grey Rolland.

Communications - Many Scouters Not Getting Information

Leslie said, "You should be getting district information from Norman, and if you're not, then you need to let him know." Lillian said, "In [the former] Twin Valleys, Ian had a list, and everyone on his list would get messages. I don't think they're getting messages now." Norman responded that the current Three Rivers distribution list was compiled by Council Webmaster Rob Coonce, who consolidated lists used by the former Twin Valleys, Tantaqua, and Hudson-Liberty Districts. Lillian insisted that Twin Valleys had somehow been omitted, saying, "Even tonight, Twin Valleys people were calling each

other asking, 'Do you know where it is?'" Biff agreed, and said, "There's three towns with six units in Southern Valley getting nothing." Ian said, "I sent my list to Rob." Leslie said, "Just in case, send your list to Norman too." Bob Lilley gave Norman two printed Twin Valleys contact lists he had with him.

Activities - Klondike Derby (Jan 28)

Alan Sterk addressed a concern that was voiced to him by several people wondering if the upcoming Klondike can handle the large number of Scouts expected to attend from our new, much larger district. Alan went to the white board and asked, "Does anyone here know how a factory assembly line works? (no)" Then he asked, "Has everyone here been to Disney World? (yes)" He then drew a picture to explain the difference and how his crew will use the Disney "multiple loop system" both to handle a large number of Scouts and also to cope with potential bottlenecks. He said, "It works, no matter how many people you put in it -- 1,000, 2,000... You just expand the loops." Biff asked for additional details, which Alan provided, talking about radio contact among the "starters," and how the staff will handle bottlenecks.

About Scout preparation, Alan said, "There are no tricks. You just need First Class skills." He then requested that each Troop provide one volunteer to work with the staff, plus extra help will be needed for "traffic management" and to assist the "mayors" of the six "towns" that make up the event. Alan hoped that Venturing units might volunteer. He said that a flyer will be ready in November, and that the first planning meeting will take place shortly. Leslie said she will post the location on the district's Facebook page. Alan said, "I'm encouraging as many people as possible to attend so I can expand the whole thing."

Alan said that the event will take place at the Campgaw Reservation. Working from last year's figures, he predicted about 50 from the former Hudson-Liberty, 300 from Tantaqua, and 1,000 from Twin Valleys. The number includes Webelos with the hope that they will be attracted to sign up with a Boy Scout troop.

Activities - Merit Badge Fair (Nov 19)

Gerry said that the fair will take place in Bergenfield on Nov 19, from 8:00-12:00 noon, and that a packet has already been uploaded to the District website. The packet has instructions for Scouts wishing to attend, and also an appendix with registered merit badge counselors that the Scouts can contact. Gerry said that she spent a lot of time on the phone and thanked Greg Boyle from Bayonne for agreeing to fill the final slot for Environmental Science.

Gerry explained that the fair only needs 4 hours, because Scouts and counselors are expected to make all the arrangements in advance. That is, a Scout is expected to contact the counselor in advance, to arrange with him for an appointed time slot, and to prepare all the pre-requisites. She said, "It's up to the counselor to determine how long he thinks he needs to take during the morning to get the badge covered. He also determines if he wants to see one Scout at a time or several." Gerry noted that a given counselor may

handle more than one badge during the morning, and that a given Scout may sign up for more than one. She said, "I've had kids earning four badges in one day."

Pat commended Gerry on running the Merit Badge Fair, saying that his son had attended one and that he had been promoting it ever since. When he offered to "help in any way," Gerry accepted the offer. She explained that she will be out of town that day and that she needs someone to man the sign-in table. Pat agreed. Sal asked Gerry if she needs additional counselors, to which she responded that she might expand the event next year and will put out a call if that happens.

Activities - The Council's Merit Badge Counselor List

Gerry complained about the counselor list on the NNJC website, calling it "a nightmare." She guessed that most Scouts don't even notice, because so many troops have their own in-house counselors. Gerry proposed setting up a 1-night phone bank for calling everyone on the list to verify their status, but she called it "a monumental task." She said that the list has people who moved away, and others who told her that they no longer counsel. When Gerry said that the list also contains some dead people, Pat interrupted to joke that if any of them are from Hudson County then they are probably also "certified and qualified voters who vote quite often." She concluded, "In fairness to the boys, we should clean up the list."

Activities - Cub Activity Day (Nov 5)

Leslie noted that Gordon Beattie was not present and asked if anyone else had information about the event. Mark said that he had a flyer and gave a brief description. He said it will be like a Camporee (or Gold Rush) with stations, taking place at Camp Alpine. He then read from the flyer, starting with, "It will be a fun-filled day," and concluding with "Gordon will need Boy Scouts to run the stations in order to make this thing work." Mark had a question for Gerry, who told him that the purpose of each station will be to teach, not compete, so no advance preparation will be needed.

Activities - Bowl-a-Thon (Dec 28)

Mark said that details were still being ironed out due to the consolidation. He explained that Twin Valleys and Tantaqua both used to run their own Bowl-a-Thons, which were slightly different, and now the job is to work out how to have them both run the same event, even though they will continue to run it at two different bowling alleys.

Activities - District Pinewood Derby (March TBD)

Leslie explained that individual Cub packs are expected to run their own Pinewoods, and then send the winners to compete in the District event. She said that she is willing to bring her own track to any unit that does not own one and run a derby for them. In response to Pat's question, Leslie said that there are no plans for a race where adults compete against each other. Leslie asked the group for permission to continue calling the event "The Don Wehr Classic." She explained, "Before he passed away, he just loved this event." Mike Carp asked how the sign-up will take place. Leslie said that each pack will be asked to send four Tigers and four Cubs/Webelos.

Activities - Window Display Week (Feb 5-11)

Bob Lilley described how Twin Valleys used to run its display week as a competition, with a winning troop and a winning pack each receiving a gift card. The unit puts a display in a store front window. He said, "These days there's a lot of empty stores for rent, so if you can convince the landlord, you might be able to keep your display in there until he rents the store." He listed the criteria for the minimum to be displayed (flag, activities, advancement, contact information, etc.) Bob said that he used to take photos and then show them to the District Committee for judging, but he declined to do that for our huge district. Instead Bob proposed that each unit take its own pictures and e-mail them to the Committee.

Activities - Swim Meet (April TBD)

Mike Carp described a swim meet that Hudson-Liberty held last April, saying that it took place in Secaucus and had Venturers and Scouts competing (Webelos were invited but none came). He said that the meet was organized by Jose Jerez and his Jersey City Venture Crew 1444. Several people recognized Jose's name from the OA Dance Team he advises. Mark said that Kevin Kilroy told him that the Secaucus pool might be too small for our large district. Biff said, "Bergen Community is probably the biggest pool in northern New Jersey with stadium seating."

Activities - Budgets are Needed for (Almost) All Events

Leslie said, "Just so that everybody in this room knows, I have been told that we can't put anything on the website or publicize it until there's a budget made using the Council's budget form." Mark said that he has a copy of the form and will pass it on to Norman for posting on the District website. Gerry was given an exception -- Leslie assured her that her Merit Badge Fair may proceed without a budget since it's a free event.

Activities - District Dinner (April or May TBD)

Ed Quinn said, "Neil Bookspan and I will take care of it." He said that he intended to reserve the Elks Club in Paramus, which can hold as many as 300 people.

Activities - National Jamboree and Philmont Contingent

Ian said that the 2013 National Jamboree will take place at the Summit Bechtel Reserve in West Virginia and that a website has been posted with information. He said that the current need is to get adult volunteers to sign up as Scoutmasters and Assistants to lead the NNJC contingent troops. He said, "Steve Leonardi is the contact person, but while he's out of the office I'll field any questions you have." Ian said that the Council is also putting together a contingent to fly to Philmont in the summer of 2012. He said, "If you want your troop to attend, contact Mike Cowan for that one. There's information on the Council website."

Design Ideas for a District Patch

Leslie said, "We're a super district, so we need a super patch, and I did a couple of designs." She talked about the stages she and Pat went through and showed start-off, then

intermediate, then two final designs for consideration. She passed the pictures around and asked people to annotate the pages with both comments and votes.

Each design was in the form of a triptych, with one panel for each of the three rivers. In one design, Leslie pointed out the George Washington Bridge, the Bayonne Bridge with the Statue of Liberty, a waterfall, and so on. She also pointed out how the name "Three Rivers" or "3 Rivers" was rendered in each design.

Closing Remarks

Leslie said, "I think we're really lucky. The other two districts have not gone as smoothly as ours, and it's all because of you guys." She liked the way "things are jelling and everyone is getting along." She said, "If you run into a naysayer, stick up for our district. We should be proud to be part of it -- I know I am." She added, "We have an unbelievable group of volunteers."

DE's Minute - Lex Leonard

Lex thanked everyone for coming and urged all units to run a recruitment night.