

District Committee Meeting
February 2, 2012
One Bergen County Plaza
Hackensack, NJ,

Key People

Pat Stamato, District Chair
Robert Deutsch, District Vice-Chair for Development
Sal Bellomo, District Commissioner
Joel Lieberman, Senior District Executive
See attachment for other attendees

Opening

Biff Van Kleef lead the Pledge, followed by the Scout Oath as a repeat-after-me. Pat Stamato had an agenda plus a chart with membership numbers.

Membership - Increase over last year

Reading from the Membership handout, Scott Lomberk pointed out two increases and one decrease versus this time last year (Scouts and Cubs up, Venturers down), however the unit count was down for all three unit types.

Membership - Request for numbers in advance

Robert Deutsch recalled that last month DE Ian Meades had agreed to provide membership numbers in advance of each District Committee meeting, with a copy to Scott, Hal Hochhauser, and himself, saying, "That's so we can come to the meeting prepared. Seeing the number for the first time at the meeting doesn't help." He said, "The Committee would like to target units that need help, but, without data, we're at a loss." Joel agreed.

Membership - Suggestions for recruiting

Biff said that his wife had organized a Pinewood Derby in Lyndhurst and invited every kindergarten boy in the town. He also proposed creating a Kindercub or Lion Cub program for kindergarten boys, explaining that they register with Learning for Life, which is in fact cheaper than normal Cub registration.

Membership - Who's on the Committee?

Robert said that he asked past Membership members to verify and that he will shortly broadcast a request for people to join. The request will also ask for people to work on Fundraising.

Membership - Setting goals

Sal Bellomo proposed an end-of-year goal of 3302 Cubs, about a 3% increase from last year's disappointing 3221. He said, "We have to get out there and push and recruit."

Membership - Rechartering units in 2012

Sal said, "About half our units have not even gone online yet." He described the help-session at Westwood High School as a "qualified success," with 15 units coming and 8 of them completing the process. Although Westwood was not convenient for them, Joel said one unit from the former Hudson-Liberty District came. Norman suggested that a future session might take place in Bayonne High School, recalling that a training session was run there when online rechartering was first made available. Sal said that pretty much any school with a computer lab could work, and described the full cooperation offered by Westwood. He said that Ian will contact them again to arrange for another session for the February units.

Repeating the fact that half the January units had not yet rechartered, Sal said, "I don't want to do what I did last year, which was to keep phoning the late units into May. I'm not going to chase people."

Membership - A confusing online interface

Sal said that several unit leaders tripped over the rechartering log-in screen, with its option of "First time user" versus "Returning user." Joel agreed, saying, "It's a problem we run into every year where the folks who handled the rechartering last year start off by selecting "Returning user." Norman Kasser said, "They should change the caption to 'First time this year.' That might solve it."

Membership - Recruiting

Sal said, "We have to get back to recruiting. Maybe part of last year was bad weather." Pat picked up on Sal's comment by listing a flood, the merger, and an earthquake. He said, "Last year we had three things we could blame it on, but this year we won't have those excuses." He said that the job of the Committee members was not necessarily to go out and recruit, but rather "to assist, to educate, and to motivate our troops and packs."

Robert urged people to concentrate on Cubs, since a drop in Cubs translates to a future drop in Boy Scouts. He liked Biff's idea of inviting guests to a Pinewood Derby, and Pat proposed doing the same for other events as well, such as the Tiger Tumble and the Klondike. Ken Hesse asked if there was some age where we start to lose Cubs, to which Joel immediately replied, "Third grade. It's Wolves going into Bear." Biff suggested doing something special for that age group and recalled a Bear weekend that used to take place at Yaw Paw.

Finance - Family FOS

Robert started by posing a quiz question: "What percent of our units do not run an FOS presentation?" After various guesses (all too low), he put the number at 59%. He said, "Our goal should be for every unit to at least give it a try." Ken told how he and another presenter came to a unit as a "tag-team," where Ken did FOS and the other Scouter did a camp promotion. He said, "It worked to our advantage, because parents got to see what they were getting for their money, and we got a lot a pledges."

Returning to the 59%, Norman said that he knows of a Cub pack that sells a huge amount of popcorn, and so they don't bother with FOS, since they have already raised a lot of money for the Council. Biff asked Robert to take a second look at his numbers, and to concentrate on units that do neither FOS nor popcorn. Pat said that he'd like to speak to the Cubmaster Norman mentioned. He said, "What I don't want to see is the Council losing another camp property, which will cause a lot of volunteers to get angry like they did when we lost Rock Hill."

Norman said to Joel, "[Former DE] Dave Banks once told me that part of the charter agreement requires units to hold FOS presentations. Does that sound familiar to you?" Joel responded that units agree to "uphold the Council's program" which would include FOS.

Finance - Community FOS

Pat said, "I call it community outreach." He listed upcoming events in lower Bergen (end of March), upper Bergen, then back to Hudson for a second time. He said, "Whatever business people you know, we would like to have them come and attend that event. We ask them to contribute to help support Scouting."

Finance - Council Sports Dinner (Mar 8)

Mark Wrightington said that the guest speaker will be Chris Snee of the NY Giants football team, but added, "The team is a bit busy now preparing for the Super Bowl." Pat joked, "If they lose this weekend, then it will be the quarterback of the Patriots who will be asked to speak." Eric Dlugosz said that he received an invitation and that a ticket will cost \$250 per adult and \$100 per youth..

Activities - Klondike report (Jan 28)

Peter Hilaris said that he was impressed that this year's Klondike ran smoother than last year in spite of a larger turnout, with 90 sleds versus 60. He credited the extra volunteers who showed up to help in each area, which allowed his own station to handle nine patrols at a time instead of six. He added, "Everyone commented that registration was the best it's ever been." He also thanked event chairs Allen Sterk and Lee Wallin.

Biff suggested adding "wheels" to the information packet. He said that units from the former Twin Valleys District already knew to equip their sleds with removable wheels, but others from the former Tantaqua, Hudson-Liberty, plus Southern Valley were not aware. He also wanted the packet to include a consolidated checklist of things that each unit should bring, instead of each station description having its own list. Apparently "survival kit" was not anywhere in the packet but was one of the things that the Inspection Station wanted each sled to carry. The final suggestion was for a post-Klondike session to take place at the next Roundtable.

Activities - District support

Pat took the floor and made a number of comments that he called "generalities":

- We recently had three "fantastic" major events: Bowl-a-Thon, Tiger Tumble, and Klondike.
- He liked the fact that the people at tonight's meeting were also the faces at the events.
- The Klondike ran well, but Pat was most impressed by how well people worked together.
- Pat suggested bringing and selling "promotional" items, and asked Eric to stand and show off his Three Rivers hat and T-shirt. Another example was a scarf that the former Tantaqua District once promoted.
- Pat said that we sold over 550 hot dogs with Sal in charge.
- Returning to the theme of working together, Pat said how pleased he was at how well "we merged together and jelled together." He said he went to a Council meeting last night with Sal and Robert and was able to compare the Three Rivers District to the other two. He said, "Without putting the others down, we're really moving in the right direction." He added, "I do not want to lose the talent we have in this district."
- He said, "I never want anyone in this group to feel that we're coming down on you." He explained that when problems about membership and finance are raised, the purpose is to make us all aware so that we can all work together to make the District better. Pat added, "... and also make our Council better."

Activities - District high adventure event

Pat said that Doug Dillow and Kenyon Sandy at the Council liked the idea of a district high adventure outing in the summer of 2013, and possibly also in the winter. Pat said that Doug had volunteered to find a suitable location.

Activities - District Pinewood Derby (Mar 17)

Jim Africano said that it will be held at the Paramus Elks Club, and that the Cub event will be followed by a Pinewood for adults. He said, "It's an open race for anyone who wants to participate. The wheel base and the original block have to be the same, but the adults can do... whatever!" Pat said, "Anything goes! A rocket, a fan, razor wheels... It's a fund-raiser, so they're charging \$25."

Activities - Tiger Tumble (Jan 22)

Referring to the Friday night snowstorm, Mark said, "The weather played havoc, so we had to move from Saturday to Sunday." Even so, some 90 Tigers attended, which was more than any past year, but not the 131 that Mark had expected from advance registrations. He said, "The kids all seemed to have a great time and I think it went really well." Pat thanked Mark. He also thanked Jim Africano, who ran the Stomp-Rocket station, saying, "Working with you is definitely an experience!"

Activities - Getting more unit participation

Pat said, "I'm very interested in these numbers [event attendees]." He explained that he is currently working with a Scout troop that never participates in district events and is trying to convince them to join in. Pat said they were skeptical about how many Scouts would

attend the Klondike, and would surely be impressed by the published estimate of 1,200 attendees. It was not clear if Biff was joking when he said, "Maybe we should have an FOS station." Pat immediately responded, "Biff, we have a job for you!" He then dictated for these minutes: "Biff is going to participate in Finance and FOS. Thank you, Biff." He even offered to buy a Three Rivers hat for Biff like the one that Eric was wearing.

Mark agreed with Pat's suggestion to publish the District's activities calendar early, and promised to have it ready in time for the June program launch. Pat explained that he met with some units from Bayonne who were disappointed that they missed the Klondike, and would have attended if they had known about it before they planned their own program for 2011-12. Pat was certain that these units would participate in District events if we can announce them early enough.

Mark wondered how to get more Cub packs to participate in events. He said that, out of 85 packs in our district, only 38 came to the Tiger Tumble and even less to the Bowl-a-Thon. As an example, he cited the Cub pack in his next-door town of Leonia, which never attends events (except for Derby Day). However, Pat was optimistic. He pointed out that attendance had increased at both the Tiger Tumble and Klondike, and predicted that such growth will continued in the future.

Activities - District Skit-o-Rama (TBD)

Dave Wolf described the event: "Cub packs come together to perform their favorite skits for each other. And we have a great master of ceremonies, who is almost a stand-up comedian himself." Mark was pretty sure that the location will be in Westwood, but the date has not yet been set.

Camping - Promotions

Pat said, "I understand that presenters are going out to the packs to talk up Camp Lewis," and added that a video may be shown at the upcoming Roundtable. Sal said, "Lewis had a bad drop-off in attendance and is in dire trouble, with registration fees barely covering half of their expenses."

Camping - Camp Lewis financial problems

Lillian Molnar was uncertain about the Council's commitment to Lewis based on past conversations she had when she was at Yaw Paw. She also mentioned the possibility of opening Camp Conklin. Sal assured her that whatever she heard before is not currently the case, saying "Nobody wants to lose Lewis," and expanded on the problem of not enough boys. Lillian said that she had proposed allowing Cubs to attend as day-boys, participate in the program, and then depart before the resident campers had supper. She was certain that many boys might do that for a summer and then ask to return the next year as residents. She said, "Let them see that other kids sleep there and continue the fun overnight." Pat told Lillian that he will ask Tristan Vidrero to contact her to hear first hand what she has to say.

Camping - New program at Camp Lewis

The discussion turned to how Lewis had altered its weekly program from 4 days to 3+3. Mark was dubious that the 4-day program was responsible for the drop-off in attendance and put forth his own ideas. Sal's theory was that Cubmasters were not promoting the camp enough. Ken was unhappy with a 3-day week, saying that it's not enough time to let a boy grow. Sal responded that the decision to switch was based on research with parents in focus groups. He wasn't happy about it either, but he was willing to give it a try to see what happens. He said, "I'd rather have kids come for three days than not at all."

Pat proposed that the increase in promotions planned for the spring along with the possibility of picking up Cubs from the Patriots' Path Council may turn things around. He added that some Bayonne units had also expressed interest in attending this summer. Mike Carp recalled that the OA used to have camp promotions as one of its missions, and asked "Can we get the OA back to being involved in camp promotions?" He said that the OA used to run a pancake breakfast for unit leaders and bring in the Camp Directors to promote and answer questions. Mark proposed setting up a camp table at every district event. Lillian raised several points:

- She said that some DEs had never been to Yaw Paw. She thought it necessary that all DEs should be very familiar with all of the camps.
- She told about her son's Cubmaster who was not at all enthusiastic and who simply left flyers on a table with a disinterested "Help yourself if you want one."
- She liked the idea of a pancake breakfast for unit leaders for the purpose of making sure that they all knew what the camps offered and why they are valuable.
- She said she had been pushing for years for camps to run an open-house in the spring. She said that open houses did in fact happen last year, but they occurred after the Campership and early-bird deadline.

Camping - Campership and early-bird deadlines

Lillian's last point triggered a new discussion. She made the proposal to run the open house before the deadline in March. On the other hand, Biff proposed moving the Cub deadline to later in the spring. He said that many parents don't even decide on camp until much later, and told of parents who delayed so long that they didn't have time to schedule a medical check-up.

Mike Carp recommended bringing back the annual "Taste of Summer" May camporee run by the former Hudson-Liberty District. He described the camporee as a good approximation of Cub resident camp, complete with program areas, a full kitchen, meals served, and a post-meal program. He pointed out that the year they skipped the camporee was the same year that attendance fell off. Lillian disagreed with Mike's cause-and-effect and said that the fall off was already in progress before then.

Ken said that the Council already had in mind trying to get all the Cubmasters together to promote camp, where they will explain the 3-day program but will push for 6-day sign-ups. Ken suggested packs register early just in case there's a big turnout of boys from Patriots' Path. Ken added that the Council also had in mind running an open house and

told how his own pack made it a point to bring boys to Lewis during the spring. He concluded, "There are things in the works, and hopefully Grey [Rolland] will get things moving in the right direction."

Returning to deadlines, Norman asked, "Is there any possibility that the deadlines can be pushed back? Are they really carved in stone?" The consensus was that Doug Dillow and the Council Executive Committee would have to approve. Robert said, "There are times now when it's pushed back. They already make an exception for newly-bridged Webelos who want to attend Scout camp with their new troop." He proposed that any Cub who attends an open house should also be given an extension. Bill Metts said, "Someone from the District should bring it to the Council, not an individual Cubmaster." Robert replied, "There's nothing I'd like better than to ask Grey about camperships and deadlines and all the other things that they throw at us without telling us."

As an aside, Pat pointed out that our meetings go on for too long, and that this kind of discussion should really be taking place in a Camping Committee meeting, with the result that they come here to make a report.

Two complaints about rechartering dates

Ed Quinn described how his unit was told to change their renewal date from March to January, but they were never refunded for the three months they paid for twice. Pat asked Joel to check it out and then decided to pursue it himself.

However, Joel had a complaint of his own. He described some of the history behind the Council's decision to compress all unit recharterers into a short timeframe, and how the various DEs handled the change. He was most unhappy with one of the DEs who imposed January onto all units in his area, but did not "utilize diplomacy" when he did it. The end result was that 70 units all had their recharter dates moved to January. Joel said, "How any one professional can handle that is beyond me." He said to Ed, "Our instructions were to arrange for all rechartering to take place in the first quarter: January, February, and March." Joel said to Ed, "I can agree with the administrative decision to manage all charters in the first quarter in order to make things easier, but there really was no reason to move your unit from March to January."

Planning a golfing event

Dave Wolf said that he has begun planning an event that will be called the Three Rivers Golf Classic. He said it will be the successor to a very successful annual event run by the former Twin Valleys District. Because the organizer from past years declined to continue, Dave volunteered to take charge. He gave an overview of problems to be solved and decisions to be made. However, Dave said that this year he will depend on individual units for support, saying, "If just one golfer from each of our 196 units attends, we'll fill the thing up."

Pat said that he attended last year's event and liked it a lot. He then joked with Bob Lilley about the hole-in-one prize that he was trying to win. Dave responded with a real hole-in-

one story in which the winner drove off in a brand new Lexus. Dave said that it was the man's very first swing of the day. In response to Biff's question, Dave explained that events like these are covered by insurance, so the price of the car was covered.

Training

Rich Curran started with a complaint. He said that his past BALOO courses were all at Camp Lewis, but he was told to run the most recent course at Glen Gray. He explained how important it is for 50 new Cub leaders to see Lewis and get acquainted with its sites, and equally important for them to get acquainted with a Council camp. Rich said that he was also experiencing a delay in getting the Council Training Committee to set a date.

Rich spoke about the March 3 Pow Wow training for Cub Leaders, and said that Commissioner training will also be offered there. Norman added that Den Chief training is also scheduled.

Upcoming on Feb 11 will be Cub Leader-Specific training in Oradell, originally scheduled for Jan 21 (but snowed out). Rich said that a portion of the day will be devoted to "This is Scouting," and another portion to Youth Protection Training.

Jim Wrynn said that he will run another Den Chief session on March 24 in Fair Lawn, and described some of the information he intends to pass on and some of the skills he will teach, such as "how to deal with Cub Scouts." Ken joked that he had volunteered to assist because Jim always brings donuts.

Awards

Rich said that the "Scouter of the Year" awards will be presented on Feb 17 to three people, one from each of the former districts. Ed read the text of the flyer and named the awardees: Mary Kay Tokar, Barry Messner, and Tom Molnar. Norman asked if Mary Kay was aware of the award, and Rich said that he will contact her shortly to make sure.

Rich said that Three Rivers was entitled to make up to eight District Awards of Merit, "but we need nominations." The deadline for submission will be the March Roundtable, and the awards will be presented on Apr 15. Rich said that the form is available online. Pat polled those present and found that everyone had already received a DAM on some past occasion. Joel doubted that a Scouter is allowed to earn it more than once, saying that you can't sew the knot patch onto a shirt twice, but said, "It's not out of the realm of possibility." Norman joked that the DAM patch is just an overhand knot, which is half a square knot, so there is actually room on the patch for a second award.

A geography lesson

Pat introduced Greg Boyle and asked him to talk about the three rivers (in small letters). Greg had a three-ring binder on the table along with a large map he held up with the Hudson, Hackensack, and Passaic Rivers highlighted and easily visible. Greg is a science teacher and an expert on natural history. Some of the points he made:

- Our district is well named. Greg said, "The fact is that our district is bounded by these three rivers, and the more I look at this map, the more accurate the name appears to be."
- Greg proposed a new youth award, with the working name of "The Three Rivers Three Rivers Award." It would be for a boy who did a service project on each of the three rivers. In response to Norman's question, Greg said that the Hackensack and Passaic Rivers both have Riverkeepers, each with a long list of things that need to be done. Greg said, "I spoke to both and they're very happy to do it."
- Pat made sure that Greg addressed a query from Tom Molnar: "Does our district really have just three rivers?"
- Greg said that his binder has 22 named rivers, but all of them are simply tributaries into the Hudson, Passaic, or Hackensack. He said, "The district's area is drained by just three rivers."
- The tributaries are given a name "river" or "brook," such as Saddle River or Ramapo River. But he said, "It has to do with people simply giving names without trying to be accurate."
- He pointed to the convoluted route of the Passaic River on his map and said that it starts in Madison from the swamps that used to be there caused by a glacial lake.
- Greg proposed making his information available as a booklet, saying, "You may find it interesting."

District Commissioner's Report - Community Assistant DCs (ADCs)

Sal said he now has 9 ADCs, each assigned to a "community," which can be a cluster of towns. He named Barry Messner, Bob Lilley, Dave Wolf, Eric Dlugosz, Tom Molnar, plus himself to cover the northern part of Three Rivers, with the former Hudson-Liberty in the south still in progress. He hoped that Mark might volunteer for the small Community 5, which includes Mark's hometown of Palisades Park.

Sal thought he might have as many as 40 Scouters willing to work as Unit Commissioners in the north, and he hoped for another 10-12 to work in the south. He said, "Pat told me that he's got 5 and possibly 6 candidates."

Sal said that the next meeting will take place at the Paramus Elks on Feb 16. He won't be able to attend, but Bill Metts volunteered to take charge. Someone mentioned that NNJC's annual meeting is also scheduled for Feb 16, and Sal said he would have to miss that one too.

**District Committee Meeting
February 2, 2012**

Attendance

Jim Africano
Sal Bellomo
Greg Boyle
Mikex Carp
Rich Curran
Robert Deutsch
Ken Hesse
Norman Kasser
Joel Lieberman
Bob Lilley
Scott Lomberk
Barry Messner
Bill Metts
Lillian Molnar
Dennis Ng
Ed Quinn
Raule Rodriguez
Pat Stamato
Biff Van Kleef
Dave Wolf
Mark Wrightington
Jim Wrynn