

District Committee Meeting
April 12, 2012
One Bergen County Plaza
Hackensack, NJ,

Key People

Pat Stamato, District Chair
Leslie Sonkin, District Vice-Chair for Program
Steve Leonardi, District Director
Joel Lieberman, Senior District Executive
See attachment for other attendees

Opening

Biff Van Kleef asked for a moment of prayer for those who are sick. He then led the Pledge.

Membership - Many dropped units

Pat directed attention to a handout that listed 32 dropped units that should have rechartered but had not done so. Their loss represented a membership loss of 348 youth. He said, "If anybody has contact with these units, please reach out to them." The next few minutes were spent with people providing details, usually verifying that a given unit had indeed folded. There were also some suggestions, such as contacting the unit's chartered organization or unit leader or Committee Chair.

Membership - Suggestion to recruit Cubs in the Spring

Biff said that he recently attended a "Membership Summit" where he was told that National was recommending recruiting Cubs in April and May as being more effective than in the fall. He said, "They found that kids sign up for [other] extra-curricular activities in the fall." He said that the message was directed to membership committees, Commissioner staffs, and Key-3 leaders.

Steve said, "There have been pilot programs across the country to test springtime recruitment. The pitfall is when a boy comes into a pack that doesn't do anything in the summer." Biff proposed that our district fill in the gap by running its own summer events in June, July, and August. Eric Dlugosz pointed out that we already have a Derby Day in August.

Membership - Is decline a national trend?

Barry Messner asked Steve if the decline in membership is a national trend. Biff answered first, saying that he was told that National had experienced declines for the past 38 years, but Steve had a different take, and said, "What I look at is North Jersey. Our membership has been fairly even over the years, and even had a 2% growth the year before last."

Membership - A DE's perspective

Joel described some membership problems from the DE's point of view. He told how he had focused his efforts in the past on some communities in the former Twin Valleys and Tantaqua Districts, and how he now has to focus on communities in the former Hudson-Liberty area. He said, "There are always 5, 6, or 7 units that are a struggle year after year to keep them going, but what we have now in our large territory is a list with 30-odd problem units. They're typically in tough, urban environments, and they suffer from lack of leadership. But they have plenty of kids who want to be part of the program."

Joel described how a DE might organize a round-up that gets a new pack or troop started with 30 enthusiastic boys and enthusiastic adults. He said, "Then we come to hold their hands for two meetings, but then we have to walk away [to work on something else.]" He then told how he will contact "the last known Scoutmaster" only to find out that those two meetings were the only ones that took place all year. He asked, "How can you expect a unit like that to recharter?" Joel concluded, "We have to lean more on our Commissioner staff to ensure that a unit that needs that kind of help can get it, but until we build up the Commissioners, Steve and I are the ones who try to fill in." Joel said that he had taken on "a couple of big projects," and added, "Don't be surprised if I call you and tell you that I need some help with this stuff."

Finance - Family FOS

Pat said that we need more presenters and we need to schedule some presentations quickly, "Because both Steve and Joel have 1-week vacations scheduled." Steve said that we had set a goal of 100 presentations and that we had already achieved it. But more requests are coming in, and "We're pretty much keeping ahead of it -- about a week ahead."

Norman Kasser recalled a suggestion made last month by Tom Molnar to use a "tag-team" presentation, where one presenter asks for money, and the other makes a camp promotion that explains how that money will be used. Norman said that he had spoken to Chapter Advisor Bob Manzari who liked the idea and said he was willing to "get the OA back into the camp promotion business." Norman said that Manzari is currently doing a good job of ensuring that OA members visit Scout troops to conduct elections, and thought he could do an equally good job of getting OA members to tag-team. Pat volunteered to follow up.

Joel agreed to Biff's suggestion to prepare a list for Unit Commissioners that names all units that either scheduled an FOS presentation or that sold popcorn. He said, "The Commissioners can approach the units and ask them to at least do one or the other."

Finance - Leadership FOS

Bob Lilley said, "I have a tracking sheet of District Committee members. Please look at it to see if your name is on it." Bob explained that the sheet tells which members have contributed either to Leadership FOS or to their unit's Family drive. He said, "According to this sheet, only 15 people have contributed. I have [pledge] cards if anyone wants one."

Journey to Excellence Award (JTE)

Pat said that there seemed to be a lot of confusion about how a unit goes about earning the award, saying, "I've been getting people calling me, so I want people here to understand it and go back to your unit with the information." Steve started by talking about how a district earns a JTE award, and reviewed some of the complex requirements on the application form. Pat verified that our district had earned a silver-level award for 2011. Steve also displayed output from a tracking system he is using in anticipation of applying for the award again at the end of 2012.

Steve said, "The form is simpler for Scout units," but was disappointed in how few units applied for JTE at the end of 2011, estimating perhaps 20%. He said, "This is probably something that Unit Commissioners should be discussing with their units," and noted that JTE covers the calendar year, January through December.

Norman showed off the JTE sleeve patch on his uniform shirt and said, "This patch is the last one they had at the Oakland Scout Shop and I got it. They ran out and were still out the last time I checked. I'm hoping to get another 4 dozen and hand them out to my Scouts and Cubs. The other thing I'd like to get but can't are JTE streamers for my flagpoles. Those don't seem to exist either." Steve and Joel agreed that they also had not seen any JTE streamers this year.

A flag for the Three Rivers District

Leslie said, "Tom Molnar and I are going to design it." Pat added, "Then we can start off by adding our JTE streamer to the flagpole."

Program - Gold Rush for Cubs (Apr 14)

Leslie said that the Gold Rush will take place this Saturday and asked Jim Africano to describe what we can expect when we arrive at Braddock Park in North Bergen. He told how he drove through the park looking for a likely area to set up and ended up pretty confused. He said, "I saw the football stadium, a nice green field that's fenced off so we can't get into it, and the lake. Somewhere between the closed-off field and the lake, I think there's an open field we can use. But there are no tables or benches, so anything we need we'll have to bring ourselves. But there is parking on the street."

Pat wanted to make sure that Jim had gone to the correct park and asked, "Did you see a stone boat house?" Jim joked, "I wasn't stoned and I didn't see a boat house." But he was certain that he was in the right park, saying, "When I was a 'yoot' I went to PAL day camp in that park, but I couldn't figure out where we're going to set up." Leslie said that event organizer Mark Worthington [*not present tonight*] will have signs set up to direct families in. She also requested people to volunteer to come as staff, and asked them to come early to a diner on Anderson Avenue to have breakfast and then to help set up. Pat added that Cubs should bring friends along to see what the program is like.

Recognitions - District Award of Merit Dinner (Apr 15)

Leslie said, "This is really important," and urged people to buy a ticket from Ed Quinn. Neil Bookspan recited the dinner menu while having to respond to jokes about the difference between tomato "sauce" and "gravy". Leslie said that there will be six awardees, with Pat and Eileen Davis here tonight. Ed named the other four: Bill Severino, Matt Dalzell, Jon Hill, and Joe Healy.

Program - Council Weboree (Apr 27-29)

Leslie said, "Cub leaders, make sure that your Webelos are signed up to attend. It's the premier event for them to go to. It's a really fun event for both staff and kids."

Program - District Rocket Derby (May 6)

Ken Hesse said that the May 6 date was set to give a week's delay after the Weboree. In response to Pat's question, he said that Cubs will be asked to bring along an empty 2-liter soda bottle that can be converted into a rocket. He said that the flyer will be included in the next Roundtable's packet, and walk-in registration will be acceptable.

Program - District Swim Meet (no date)

Event organizer Mike Carp said he will form a committee to organize and to find a location, and proposed to do it some time in June. John Sedlock volunteered to assist and proposed Lyndhurst "because they just put in a big, big pool." Leslie said that she and Mark Wrightington will be their "support system in case you need something done that you can't do yourself."

Program - District Camporee (Possibly Oct 12-14)

Leslie said that the Council decided to postpone their Camporee until 2013, so we intend to run our own in October. The first planning meeting took place earlier this evening. John Sedlock said that they had discussed using Laurel Hill Park in Secaucus with "The Environment" as the theme. Leslie invited people to join the committee and to run the stations: Mammal Study, Conservation, Soil and Water, Erosion, Oceanography, Wilderness Survival, "Find It," Geology, and a campfire at night. Additional suggestions were Fishing, using the Meadowlands Commission's telescope, and inviting the Hackensack Riverkeeper.

About the proposed date, Susie Becker was concerned that too many people would be away for the 3-day Columbus Day weekend, and Eileen Davis pointed out a conflict with Wood Badge. Leslie said, "Let's stick with the date for now."

Recognitions: Council Silver Beaver Dinner (May 14)

Bob named the Silver Beaver recipients and noted that 6 of the 9 are from our district: John Brobson, Debra Czerwienski, Walter Koroluk, Norman Makoujy, Llewellyn Mike Mallette, Chuck Mason, Ernie Sprance, Dave Wolf, and Mark Wrightington.

Pat said, "This will be very important and these people need our support. If we could all go together that would be great." Joel said that the cost will be \$60 with online

registrations starting next week. Pat remembered that Warren Dressler will also receive the "very prestigious" Silver Antelope award.

Camping - Registrations to date

Barry Messner said that while he and Grey Rolland were reviewing camperships, Grey told him that registration at all of the Council camps "is going very well," with No-Be almost full at 1,600 (capacity 1,700), Lewis "looking better than last year," Turrell and Yaw Paw "looking good," and about 180 Scouts signed up for high adventure at Floodwood.

Barry said that a new video on CD exists that covers both Cub camps, but is not year-specific, so we can use it again in the future. He said, "Steve has two and I have one. Can anyone make copies in bulk?" Biff proposed bringing 20 to the upcoming Roundtable, and Steve and Leslie said they would try to make as many as possible, but one at a time. Barry said that he expects to show the video during the Roundtable.

Camping - Paulsen Camperships for Scouts in North Hudson County

Norman gave a brief overview of the camperships offered to Scouts and Cubs who live in a prescribed set of ZIP codes surrounding the Grove Church in North Bergen. He said that the fund was well endowed and very generous, and in fact the area served did have many families that can use financial assistance.

Training - Donated Audio/Video

Rich Curran let everyone know that a donated laptop and projector are available, saying that they were donated a couple of years ago to the former Twin Valleys District for training or other uses. There was some discussion about their current location, concluding with "Contact Steve if you want to borrow them."

Training - Wood Badge (fall 2012 and spring 2013)

Eric described Wood Badge as "advanced training, but you have a lot of fun and make good friends." He said that there will be two 2-part courses, one in Sep+Oct and one in May+Jun, and he will be Course Director for the latter, with details on the Council website. Eric said that Ed Ference had already signed up.

Training - Scoutmaster Leader-Specific (Apr 28 and May 5)

Ken Dutcher said that he will run a 1-day training session for Scoutmasters and Assistants on April 28, and that Rob Dente of Ramapo Valley District will run another session on May 5. Rob runs his at no cost but "bring your own lunch," whereas Ken charges \$15 but will provide lunch and coffee throughout the day.

Training - Preliminary name for a combined weekend session: "Train-o-Ree"

Ken described a weekend at Camp Lewis devoted to training consisting of simultaneous sessions given for many of the courses that Scouts offer. Ken said that it will be organized by Rob Dente and Robin Caiazzo of Ramapo Valley District, and modeled on "University of Scouting" weekends done elsewhere. However, this weekend will concentrate on Boy

Scout related topics, with sessions for both adults and youth. However, Joel said that the Council will encourage the organizers to add Cub related training sessions as well.

In response to Biff's question, Ken said that sessions for Scouts might include belaying and climbing and maybe some merit badges, "But this is all in the early rough stages, so I don't want to say too much about it." However, he did think that some NYLT staff members might come to conduct basic leadership sessions.

Training - Outdoor skills (Nov 2-4)

Rich Curran told how the Council Training Committee decided a year ago that districts should conduct outdoor skills training, but reversed itself a month ago. Meanwhile, they asked Rich to run a "OWLS" session in November for Webelos leaders, but have not yet confirmed the session. He also wants the Council to run a simultaneous "IOLS" course for Scout leaders, both to take place at Camp Lewis. Rich said, "The problem is that we've got to get the reservation in so as to get that weekend before some Scout troop does, otherwise we'll have no place to run them." He asked Joel to make that reservation.

Training - New online training course for Cub leaders

Rich said that Cub leader-specific training had just been added to National's online training modules, but expressed his opinion that live training sessions are far superior, since students can ask questions and also benefit from the experience of others in the group. Rich said he was doing his own evaluation of the online course and was about halfway through it.

Advancement - New Eagle workbook

Ed Ference said that he went to the prior Roundtable to remind leaders that the new Eagle project workbook is online. Also online is a simplified application form to use when a Life Scout with special needs should use "alternate" requirements to earn a merit badge.

Advancement - New merit badge: Kayaking (May 1)

Ed said that National had eliminated the "Kayaking BSA" award in favor of a new Kayaking merit badge, which Bill Metts said will be announced on May 1. Ed said that Camp Turrell was already planning to offer it, but was not sure how they would squeeze it into their waterfront schedule -- his guess was they would do it during "open boating."

Advancement - Evaluating Eagle project proposals

Ed Ference and Ken Dutcher talked about several Eagle project proposals they received and how some of them did not meet the requirements:

- Ed said that his Advancement Committee had recently received some Eagle Project proposals involving \$2,000-\$3,000 in expenditures. This led him to make several comments just about fund-raising (below).
- Ed said that one costly proposal said, "Corporate sponsor." He warned that such a proposal must be forwarded to the Council Advancement Committee for approval.
- Ed said, "We're seeing projects that are tailor-made for the kids, and they're pretty simple." He gave the example of a painting project where the town provided the

paint leaving the Scout with little to do but provide free labor. He said, "I tell the kids that they have to meet me halfway. They should do some fund-raising of their own." He suggested they run a car wash or some other event where they can demonstrate leadership.

- Ken added, "The point of the project is for the boy to demonstrate his leadership, so if everything is handed to the boy, that can't happen."
- Ken also cited a category of project that has never been allowed, which he called routine maintenance. Examples were landscaping, pulling weeds, or planting annual flowers.
- Ken said, "we're trying to convey to the Scout and also to his troop leaders that he has to invest some kind of effort and initiative and leadership. Organizing some kind of fund-raising activity is fine: a car wash, a pancake breakfast, a pasta dinner... these are all leadership opportunities if done correctly."
- Ken said, "We have been bouncing back proposals along with explanations and suggestions for improvement."
- Ed wanted to make it clear that each review is a collaborative process with more than one person on the Committee going over a proposal.
- Ed said, "We're talking to you now, but we really want to talk to the leaders, so we'll be making a presentation at the next Roundtable."
- Ed said, "We want to prevent cases where a boy starts a project before he gets approval, and we also want the Scoutmasters to review the proposals first -- they shouldn't get to us with problems. Sometimes we can't tell if the Scoutmaster had actually reviewed it or looked at it or thought about it."

Activities - Proposed golf outing (Sep 2012)

Pat said that a planning meeting had taken place with another set for next week, and that they will soon set a date in September. It will take place at the White Beeches Country Club in Haworth. He asked who in the room played golf but only one hand was raised.

Bob Lilley said that Event Chair Dave Wolf wants every troop and pack to sponsor a hole for a cost of \$150 with the result that a sign would be posted by that hole. It will be 18 holes with a shotgun start and a dinner afterward. There will also be a hole-in-one contest. The raffle prizes will be for different restaurants -- whatever we can scrounge. Last year we had a couple of TVs and VCRs. Bob said that the entry fee had not been set but last year it was \$125. He said that past outings had honored one Scouter and one person from the community, such as last year's Bergen County Sheriff Saudino and the Chairman of United Water the previous year. For this year's Scouter, Bob said the committee will soon put out a request for nominations.

Activities - "Operation Paddle-Smart"

Ed Quinn said that the Coast Guard will run a "Paddle Smart" course for kayakers at the Scout Museum in a couple of weeks. He said that he didn't have details with him but people can call him.

New Faces at tonight's meeting

Rose Duane introduced herself as a leader from Pack 120 in North Arlington with experience in marketing, such as marketing schools to parents. She said that, for her Wood Badge ticket, she will develop a marketing plan for Camp Lewis, but one that can also be used for other camps.

Eileen Davis introduced herself as a nurse practitioner whose job location makes it hard for her to attend these meetings. Pat noted that Eileen will shortly receive a District Award of Merit.

John Sedlock introduced himself as the Scoutmaster of Troop 97 in Lyndhurst ("for way too long"). He said "The whole troop is here to help." He was accompanied by John Tkaczyk.

June Roundtable/Program Launch

Biff said that the June Roundtable will be held at American Legion Post #170 in Rochelle Park. He wanted to treat this Roundtable like a district program launch, noting that the Council's program launch is poorly attended. He asked each of our District's committees to prepare a full set of handouts. For example, Membership should have a handout for a unit to request flyers for its recruitment, and Finance should have a handout for a unit to request an FOS presentation and another for potential presenters to sign up.

Biff wanted to have a District calendar that covers activities, advancement, and training events through 2013. There should also be flyers for each event that tells where, when, how much, and whom to contact. Biff said, "It's imperative for a unit to know well in advance about events instead of finding out a month before it happens. The units won't participate if they don't know about it ahead of time." Leslie agreed, saying that the former Tantaqua District conducted program launches in June with good results for the units.

Biff concluded with this maxim: "Program brings boys, boys bring money, money brings program." He said, "You can't get boys into a unit without program, so you've got to get this information out to the units."

Roundtables - Proposal for a Thank-You

Neil Bookspan proposed some kind of thank-you plaque or certificate for Karen Chapman, who provides space for our Roundtables at the Holy Name Medical Center in Teaneck. He said, "I wanted to get an 'OK' before doing it." Pat and Leslie agreed immediately and Leslie called for a vote, which was unanimous. Biff suggested the June Roundtable as a possible venue.

DE's Minute - Upcoming National Jamboree

Steve started by asking if anyone had attended a National or World Jamboree as a Scout [several hands were raised]. He called it "one of the pinnacle experiences a boy can have." He said that he recently drove to the Summit Reservation in West Virginia for an

advance look at the site of the 2013 Jambo and was very impressed with what he saw. Steve added that Summit is the newest Scout high adventure base after Philmont, Northern Tier, and Sea Base. He said that the New River Gorge running through the park was designated a "scenic river" with class 3-4-5 rapids, depending on how much water is released. He said that Scouts are contracting with professional rafting companies to run treks.

Steve explained how the Summit site was selected over many other candidates, based on criteria like accessibility from major interstate highways and its location adjacent to a large national park. He said that NNJC had been allocated space for 8 provisional troops or crews with the 4th currently being put together based on about 170 firm registrations. Steve said the deadline is "the end of May, which is looming." Steve said that online registration is clumsy and recommended simply dropping off a paper application form.

High adventure follow-up

Jim Preciado elaborated on Steve's list of high adventure bases by making these points:

- He recalled when he was a young Scout reading about Philmont and the Jamboree in his Scout handbook, but always thought of them as available for other Scouts, not him.
- The Scouting organization has "phenomenal" resources, and all we have to do is let the boys know that they exist and are available to all of them.
- He called Northern Tier "the best kept secret we have -- I'd go back there in a heartbeat."
- He told about being on Staff at the 2010 Jambo and being "kind of impressed" when 25,000-30,000 kids all came at once to the "Gathering" event.
- Jim then told about being on Staff at the World Jambo in Sweden and being really impressed when 47,000 Scouts attended its Gathering.
- Jim said that the 2015 World Jambo will take place in Japan and 2019 will take place at the Summit in West Virginia.
- About Sweden, Jim said that the Staff never heard of a single problem among the 47,000 and asked, "Why can't countries get along the way our kids can?"
- Jim's summary of how good these opportunities are was, "There should be a wait list of boys wanting to sign up, but there's not."
- Jim said, "Money is not a problem. No kid should be excluded because of money. If a kid wants to go, we'll find a way to get him the money." Steve agreed.

**District Committee Meeting
April 12, 2012**

Attendance

Paul Adams
Jim Africano
Susie Becker
Neil Bookspan
Greg Boyle
Mike Carp
Richard Curran
Eileen Davis
Amando Dimitui
Rose Duane
Ken Dutcher
Ed Ference
Ken Hesse
Norman Kasser
Steve Leonardi
Joel Lieberman
Bob Lilley
Scott Lomberk
Barry Messner
William Metts
Tom Molnar
James Preciado
Ed Quinn
John Sedlock
Leslie Sonkin
Patrick Stamato
John Tkaczyk
Biff Van Kleef