

District Committee Meeting
November 8, 2012
One Bergen County Plaza
Hackensack, NJ,

Key People

Leslie Sonkin, District Vice-Chair for Program
Sal Bellomo, District Commissioner
Joel Lieberman, Senior District Executive
See attachment for other attendees

Opening

Sal Bellomo introduced his son, Sal, Jr, saying that he had recently earned his Eagle badge and had just turned 18. He was invited to lead the Pledge of Allegiance. An agenda and several flyers were passed around.

Feedback from Hurricane Sandy

Sal explained that District Chair Pat Stamato could not attend tonight, because he had to look after damage to his home. He said that Leslie Sonkin will arrive later. Several other people also shared stories about hurricane damage.

Later in the meeting , Leslie told about our District collection drive. She told how she started by contacting the Red Cross, but was disappointed with their lack of response. Her next contact was a friend in Tenafly who does animal rescue but this time decided to "rescue animals and humans!" The friend contacted various mayors who put her in contact with community organizers. Leslie said that her friend solved the problem of ensuring that donated items will be trucked to hard-hit towns and then handed directly to people who really need them.

Leslie then gave details about our collection drive: We are asking for people to deliver their donations to the Council office. The next need will be for trucks to drive items from the Council to Tenafly on Sunday. Leslie stressed that the drive will be ongoing and not stop on Sunday. Donations will still be welcome and other calls for drivers will happen.

Joel said that all of the Council's camp properties had been seriously damaged, and that Grey Rolland had broadcast a request for adult volunteers with power tools. However, Camp Yaw Paw was not on the list due to a recent fire at the Ranger's workshop that requires investigation. No-Be has a special need due to a fallen tree that is blocking the main access road. Joel said that Ranger Tom Rich asked for a back hoe or excavator to help clear it. Ken Hesse said he may be able to assist. Luckily the Council Service Center received just minor water damage in the basement.

Activities: Cub Activity Day Postponed (changed from Nov 3 to Nov 17)

In response to Mark Wrightington's question, Joel doubted that Camp Alpine would be available for Activity Day on Nov 17. Biff Van Kleef suggested that Camp Veritans

might be available and volunteered to ask one of the Veritans members at tomorrow's beefsteak dinner run by "Friends of Camp Turrell."

Membership: October Numbers Way Down

The agenda called for Membership Chair Susie Becker to make this report, but Joel filled in for her. Pointing to a handout, Joel said, "It looks awful!" The chart showed youth down by 634 (5,254 down to current 4,620) and the number of units down by 211 (386 down to current 175). He spoke about the concern at the Council office and the pressure he is under, but his main concern was about Cub Scout youth applications being accepted by units but not being turned in to the Council, saying, "I keep hearing good things about how many boys are being recruited and how many new Tiger dens are being formed, but we're just not getting them into the office! They're out there!"

Joel said that some units were having a hard time getting started, and will have to shift to a Plan-B of running a recruiting drive in the form of a Christmas party. He said, "We have two in Jersey City and one in Kearny." Joel passed around a flyer promoting a "Flag Football" event in Kearny intended as a recruitment device and said "Steve [Leonardi] and Oliris [Ramos] and I are trying to give them a helping hand."

Returning to the missing application forms, Joel named several packs that had told him about new Cubs joining and said, "I've gone as far as offering to drive out to them to pick up their forms." He said, "When a family fills out an application and gives money, they leave the meeting thinking that their son is part of the Scout organization. The fact is that we must have these papers so that when these boys start their advancement or when they come to events, there are no issues about them being officially registered." Sal, Biff, and the other Unit Commissioners said they will do what they can to collect application forms and asked Joel for details. As an upside, Joel said, "I've been pleasantly surprised by our Scout troops, coming in with five new Scouts here and two-three new Scouts there."

Membership: A Proposal to Collect Application Forms

Joel wondered aloud, "Is it a training thing that we need for new Cubmasters and Committee Chairs? Do they understand what the process is?" Dave Wolf suggested that the Council office is just too far away and offered to set up a temporary operation, possibly in the Westwood high school. He said, "Let's send an e-mail to Cubmasters and Committee Chair saying that Bob [Lilley] and I will be there to look over the applications and take their checks. Just like we had a 'rechartering night,' let's have an 'application turn-in night.'" Later in the meeting, Dave decided to change the location to the United Methodist Church in Westwood.

Membership: Big Units Need a Membership Chair

Joel told about a new Cubmaster still trying to get on top of things, saying, "He's got paperwork with one person and the check went to someone else, and he's trying to get them together so I can pick them up." Joel's advice was, "If you have a pack with 50 or more families, you want to have one committee member whose sole purpose is to deal with membership and recruitment." He proposed a Roundtable session devoted to training

Cubmasters and their membership chairs on how to handle each Youth Application form and its carbon copies. He said, "Some Cubmasters get frustrated with the pro-rating and decide it's easier just to wait until it's time to recharter."

Membership: Training Needed

Ken questioned doing a session at a Roundtable, saying, "Most of the people who come are the old seasoned ones," to which Joel responded, "Then how do we get the new unit leaders to come to our Roundtables?" Biff was convinced that it was a training issue, saying, "New unit leaders are now getting their training online and are not getting that face-to-face contact with someone from the District. They don't know about Roundtables, they don't know about Cub events, and they don't know about what's going on in the camps."

Paul Adams asked, "Maybe we should have some kind of certification that says you must receive training in order to be a new Cubmaster or Scoutmaster." Biff responded that some Scout councils do have that requirement and added, "We're not brave enough." Sal agreed, pointing out that the requirement might result in losing volunteers.

Membership: Online Registration Pilot Program

Paul asked Joel, "If we can have online advancement, why can't we have online registration [for new Cubs and Scouts]?" Joel responded, "We're going in that direction," and explained a pilot program starting with some Cub packs as found on www.BeAScout.org, such as Eric Dlugosz's unit. He said that a link at the bottom of the BeAScout pop-up allows a family to register online, with a PDF copy going to Eric, which he forwards to the Council.

Joel also described how the registration fee is handled, but Mark pointed out that the procedure might not work for his unit, since he imposes a fee surcharge to cover extras, such as handbooks and T-shirts.

Membership: Joel's Request for Help (1)

Joel said, "At this point in time, all I can ask is that, any time you interact with a Cubmaster or Committee Chair, ask him how his recruitment went." For a poor recruitment, Joel's suggestion was to run another, such as a Christmas party, which might work "because it will pick up the kids who are done with fall sports." For a good recruitment, Joel proposed asking, "Did your paperwork get to the office yet?" Joel repeated his conviction that units had lots of new Cubs whose application forms had simply not been turned in yet.

Biff handed out summary sheets to the other ADCs (Assistant District Commissioners) and asked them to look specifically for units that showed zero growth between September and October. Lillian immediately found one and said, "They told me that they recruited 10-11 kids, and yet their numbers are the same between August and October."

Membership: Joel's Request for Help (2)

Rich Curran pointed out that many Cub packs change leadership when their Webelos leave the pack for the Scouts and parents leave with them. He said, "We Unit Commissioners have to ensure that there are active backups for the Cubmaster and Committee Chair." Joel agreed and requested that he be informed whenever such changes take place. He said, "It's a lot easier if we try to contact the right person to begin with instead of calling the old person and finding out that way. It's almost embarrassing when they say, 'I'm not the person to call anymore. Call this person instead.'"

Family FOS: Preparing for 2013

Biff said that the District goal is to raise \$90,000 and that we're now at 55.8%, thanks to a recent \$5,000 donation. He took a moment to explain that he and Steve Leonardi had to manually extract TRD numbers out of a Council-wide file with all districts mixed together.

Biff said he will shortly give the ADCs a handout that shows which units have not yet had an FOS presentation and thus should be asked to do so. He proposed that if a unit refuses they should be asked to make a "unit pledge, such as \$20 per boy or \$100 for the unit." Another possibility is to contact the unit's sponsor, such as the American Legion or the VFW, etc. Biff said, "If they've done nothing so far, insist that they set up a concrete date between January and June 2013." He pointed out that we still have six weeks to do presentations, then added that he will try to have our 2013 goal reduced to "something more realistic."

Family FOS: Is it Appropriate at an Eagle Ceremony?

Biff asked people present to comment as to whether or not it's appropriate to make an FOS presentation during an Eagle Court of Honor, noting that it's fairly common at Blue-and-Gold banquets and Webelos crossing ceremonies. The responses were mixed, ranging from "Yes, why not?" to "No, it's the boy's own day and sacrosanct." Dave said that he asks people "to support Scouting any way they can, since the new Eagle is an example of what comes out of the program. If a Scout asks you to buy popcorn, please do it." Rich told of a time when Steve Leonardi pointed out the special NNJC Eagle shoulder patch given to the Scout, after which Rich said that his own patch was a "fund-raising patch."

Family FOS: Training for Presenters (Nov 27)

Biff said that training will be available for TRD FOS presenters at 6:30 PM on Nov 27, probably at the Council office.

Activities: Golf Outing a Success (Oct 18)

Dave said, "The golf outing was great! It was phenomenal! We had the most gorgeous day in October that we've ever had!" He said that participation was down from last year but adequate, with golfers playing on the front nine while country club members played on the back nine. Dave predicted a nice article in the upcoming Bergen County magazine, which should result in better participation next year, and passed around a copy of the ad journal that listed sponsors. Dave praised the White Beeches club and noted the

advantage to serving hors d'oeuvres and dinner at the club instead of asking golfers to drive to a restaurant. He said that the event had raised over \$12,000. Sal joked, "Make sure you have the same bartender next year. He had a heavy arm when he poured the drinks."

Popcorn: Upcoming Pickup of Take-Orders (Nov 17-18)

Lillian said that she had manually totaled TRD sales (the Trail's End database is now organized by community) and was pleased with \$321,934 until she discovered that our goal was much higher at \$500,000! She added that the new file organization also prevented her from making any kind of comparison to last year, saying, "For all practical purposes, this is the first year that the Council has ever sold popcorn."

Lillian was surprised to find seven "no-show" units; that is, units that signed up in June to sell but had not done so. She asked for volunteers to come to the Elmwood Park warehouse on Friday Nov 16 to help organize the shipment coming in from Trail's End. She explained that shipments usually come on Wednesday, which gives a lot of time before the weekend pickup, but the storm delayed this year's delivery until Friday. Lillian said that units will be e-mailed time slots when they should arrive for pick-up.

Dave tried to guess what the other district goals were. He recalled that the Council had raised \$1.2 million last year and proposed that this year's goals might be \$500K + \$500K + \$200K. But Joel cut him off, saying, "Forget about the Council goal -- we won't even reach last year's total."

"Words to Live By" Event (Nov 26)

Joel said "We have 8 or 9 names of people to invite -- but we have a problem." He explained that the proposed restaurant in Weehawken had suffered storm damage and that a new "somewhat classy" location had not yet been selected. He said, "We're looking for something central, such as Saddle Brook, Hackensack, etc." Dave volunteered to check with the White Beeches Country Club.

In response to Paul's question, Joel described "Words to Live By" as "Friends of Scouting for our friends." Some 20 or so people will be invited for cocktails (but not dinner), arriving at 6:30 PM and departing around 8:00. For this event, speakers will be Dr. Phil Mollica plus a Scout, each of whom will talk about Scouting's "story." He said, "You don't even have to make a donation that night -- just a commitment and we'll chase them later."

Leslie said that we invite people with "the means to make a sizable donation, even though they are not currently involved with Scouting." Joel added that we try to "re-engage Scout alumni." Paul asked if there exists a list of former Scouts. Joel said that National tracks Eagle Scouts, but a program to locate former non-Eagle Scouts was started a couple of years ago. He said, "It provides prospecting for us to engage some of these folks and get them back involved with Scouting -- if they're interested."

Advancement - Recent Committee Meeting (Oct 25)

Paul described some of the topics discussed:

- A new merit badge, Search and Rescue, was introduced last May. Paul added that two adults in his unit work for New Jersey S&R, and that he will try to sign them up as counselors.
- Extensions to the Eagle 18-year old requirement can be granted for reasons of illness, disability, or family-related reasons. Paul said that the SOP is quite thick and calls for an investigation.
- Eagle project proposals are now in PDF format and come to Paul or Ed Ference or Ken Dutcher, and all three look them over for "weaknesses and strengths."
- The new project workbook has several "open-ended" questions. Paul gave an example of a proposal to build bat houses, and said, "The question was, Is 10 enough? Is 20 enough?"
- The main purpose of the project is an opportunity for the Scout to show leadership. Paul said, "We're trying to get away from a project where the beneficiary is an organization that just wants free labor from the Scouts."
- Having an "Eagle Coach" is highly recommended, and Paul said that the packet from National with a boy's Eagle medal also contains a lapel pin to be awarded to his "Eagle Mentor."
- Scoutmasters should be "gate keepers." That is, the Scoutmaster should review the workbook before it is e-mailed to the Advancement Committee.
- Paul said that the District had done 200 Eagles this year, with four last month.
- One of last month's Eagles was age 15, which triggered some side discussions. Paul was not concerned, since 99% of the projects in TRD are submitted by 17-year olds verging on 18. But Paul remarked on the large number of very young Eagle Scouts from elsewhere that he saw at the last National Jamboree.
- The Committee developed a project checklist that the Scout is supposed to fill out, and that the Scoutmaster is supposed to review and countersign. Paul said, "We sometimes get blank projects with just one or two lines -- they have to expand about what they intend to do."
- The Committee is now starting to encourage fund-raising that the boy does on his own in order to demonstrate leadership.
- The Committee is trying to cut down on repeats, such as painting maltese crosses on the street (to mark fire hydrants) and then redoing them a few years later. This started a side discussion. Joel agreed with the Committee's decision to "put a hold on repeats." On the other hand, Mark asked how a project that was acceptable in the past suddenly became unacceptable. Lillian said that her understanding about food drives was that they are unacceptable because they are being done by other organizations, citing a proposal in her troop to collect eyeglasses that was rejected on that basis. She asked, "Who decides?" Paul responded that his committee makes the call.
- Paul returned to "originality" and cited a food drive for animals and a project to record people's DNA. He also thought that a Hurricane Sandy-inspired project about preparedness would work well.

- Mark allowed that he was not all that familiar with what makes a project acceptable, but suggested that the main criteria should be how much benefit they provide. He said that the Red Cross constantly asks him for help with blood drives and that he found it hard to believe that the Committee's project checklist specifically names blood drives as requiring extra justification.
- Paul recalled a rejected project where the Scout had "bitten off more than he could chew," having estimated the cost of materials at \$4,000.
- Paul recalled another project where the "kid involvement" got lost when an adult metalworker just took it over and fabricated all the crosses that the Scouts were planning to do themselves.

Advancement - Eagle Project Training for Scoutmasters

Biff asked about the Scoutmaster Awareness Training sessions (Paul called them "road shows"), and wondered why they don't appear on the District calendar. Sal responded that the Eagle Project Workbook is so new that notifications so far are being done as "e-mail blasts." Paul and Sal agreed with Biff's suggestion to schedule one in the fall and one in the spring. Sal said, "This training is important if we're talking about 200 Eagles in one year."

Advancement - Life-to-Eagle Sessions

Rich recalled that one of our former districts used to run "Life-to-Eagle" training sessions, with boys in one room and adults in another. Joel said that someone was now looking into getting the sessions restarted.

Training - Planning at the Council

Rich said that he and Warren Dressler attended a Council-level meeting about training, noting that neither Lenape Trails nor Ramapo Valley were represented. He said that organizing District-level training was being held up while people are working on creating a cadre of "community trainers." Rich said that he offered to arrange for many venues around Bergen County using his contacts with the American Legion.

In response to Norman Kasser's question, Rich said that most of the meeting was about Wood Badge and EDGE and other Council-level training, with little time devoted to districts. Rich said that Warren will handle most of our TRD training, but Rich will be in charge of leader training awards, such as knots and Scouters Keys.

Training - BALOO for Cub Leaders (Dec 1)

Leslie called attention to the calendar entry for BALOO training at Westwood High School on Dec 1. Lillian pointed out the conflict with the University of Scouting run by Patriot's Path Council. Rich said he complained that BALOO online registration was closed too far in advance (on Nov 1) and managed to get the registration reopened.

Camping - Help Wanted

Leslie said that John Beatty will have a problem as TRD Camping Chair for Boy Scouts due to a new teaching job. She asked if "someone could step in," explaining that the main

responsibility is to do camp promotions. Barry Messner agreed to take over. In response to Sal's question, Leslie said that Matt Dalzell has been showing up at many events to do promotions for both Cub and Scout camps.

Activities - Merit Badge Fair (Nov 17)

Leslie passed on a report from event organizer Gerry Beatty that "attendance is terrific," with Scouts coming both from out of district and from out-of-council. Paul recalled that Scouts must come in with all requirements completed and ready for review by the counselor, that Scouts must attend in Class-A uniform, and that Scouts may bring in "partials" from summer camp in order to convert them to completions. Sal joked that Swimming cannot be completed at the Fair, but Paul countered that flooding from the storm might make even Swimming possible.

Activities - Bowl-a-Thon (Dec 28)

Mark said that the Bowl-a-Thon will take place on Friday Dec 28 at two, and hopefully three different locations. The one done last year at Elmwood Park will stay the same, but the one done last year at Fair Lawn will move back to Montvale. The third one will take place in Hudson County with Mark expecting a call back from a lane in Bayonne.

Activities - Tiger Tumble (Jan 19)

Mark said that the Tiger Tumble is on track and that he believes that he will have enough staff to run it.

Activities - Klondike Derby (Jan 26)

Biff was concerned that the Roundtable staff had not yet seen a handout for the January Klondike. Joel recalled that event organizer Allen Sterk needs volunteers to act as station "Mayors."

**District Committee Meeting
November 8, 2012**

Attendance

Paul Adams

Jim Africano

Sal Bellomo

Sal Bellomo, Jr

Rich Curran

Ken Hesse

Norman Kasser

Joel Lieberman

Bob Lilley

Barry Messner

Bill Metts

Tom Molnar

Lillian Molnar

Leslie Sonkin

Biff Van Kleef

Dave Wolf

Mark Wrightington