District Committee Meeting December 6, 2012 One Bergen County Plaza Hackensack, NJ,

Key People

Pat Stamato, District Chair Steve Leonardi, District Director Joel Lieberman, Senior District Executive See attachment for other attendees

Welcome

Pat welcomed everyone and asked for a short meeting to accommodate anyone who intends to also attend tonight's Commissioner meeting at Sal Bellomo's office.

Poll about storm damage

Pat asked how people did during Hurricane Sandy and described his own experiences, which were exacerbated by lack of phone service. He praised Leslie Sonkin's efforts to coordinate the Council's relief project, saying, "I thought it was really great!" He added that numerous Boy Scouts had also done work in their respective communities. Pat advised, "When they say it's mandatory evacuation: Leave! I didn't!"

Membership - Action Plan for 2013

Joel said that the Council wants volunteer Scouters to participate in creation of an action plan, in contrast to past years when the DEs did it all themselves. He said, "Steve Grey and Pat Coviello want to come up with a plan where everyone has some buy-in." He said that they want people to share ideas and come up with, "Why don't we try this..." Joel said, "A lot of you have shared great ideas with me over the years and now is the time to try some of them out." Joel was mostly concerned with shrinking Cub packs and said, "Our Boy Scout numbers are holding firm, but soon they'll start to suffer because the Cub packs are not there any more. We can't afford to have these shrinking units." He proposed visiting such packs to find out what is going on, whether it's leadership turnover or lack of training, or perhaps: "We need to find someone else to take over because the current leader is not the right person."

Steve said, "We've never really had a functioning membership team," noting that Susie Becker started a few months ago but, "It has to be more than one person." Ken Hesse recalled that Scott Lomberk was in the same situation before Susie, and how Scott was surprised that no one was willing to step forward to assist him.

Pat wondered if it might be useful for Unit Commissioners to somehow evaluate unit leaders and said that he had witnessed unit leaders who were clearly not up to the job. Ken, who is an active Unit Commissioner, said, "We really can't do it. That's something that has to go to the unit's Chartered Organization Representative (COR)." Pat clarified by saying, "I want the Unit Commissioners just to observe and size up the situation. Give

input if it's asked for, but if not, make a report at the Council-level." Pat explained that he preferred Council-level action because the situation is "drastic" and must be turned around, especially in light of all the bad press that Scouts have gotten recently.

John Musser told about good results he had gotten with a Scout troop in Tucson Arizona, saying that he met with the Troop Committee Chair, described what he thought should be fixed, and urged the Chair to attend a meeting in order to see for himself.

Membership - Suggestions from Warren Dressler and Ken Hesse

Warren Dressler wanted to focus on Cub membership and passed on a finding from a national seminar he attended: "Kids leave packs because the program is boring." His conclusion was that we don't do an adequate job training the leaders and that we don't provide enough support, but he then qualified by saying, "There's no magic answer to this. Every Cub pack is going to be different."

Warren passed on information from another seminar he attended that was presented by three separate Scout councils, each of which had great success recruiting in minority communities, one Asian, one black, and one Hispanic. Warren pointed out that these communities have the "same family-based values that Scouting is built on." He said that the Asian success was due to hiring professionals who knew the community, and also recruiting community organizations to sponsor units, such as the Chinese-American Association.

Warren also warned about Cub packs that don't have a "succession plan," and gave an example of a pack that folded when all the Cubs graduated and "their parents walked off and left." Ken pointed out that our Cub leader training focuses on how to run the program but never on how to recruit new adults. He told of many units where one person does many jobs, such as Cubmaster and Den Leader and Treasurer, etc., instead of getting other parents to do them. However, Ken agreed that getting parents to volunteer is not easy, saying, "Most of them are drop-and-run." Ken also told of a Scoutmaster who announced three years ago that he will step down, but no replacement has yet been found.

Warren proposed that we do a big push to get unit leaders to attend the Pow Wow in March. He said, "Roundtables used to be the place where people came to network, but now it's where the choir comes after a rehearsal." He said that online registration is now available, but Ken urged Warren to also prepare a flyer as soon as possible so that it can be distributed at the upcoming Roundtables. Warren responded, "Please push it now. If people go in groups, they're more likely to go. It's a great networking opportunity, and people can see other people that are successful, and there are some successful packs!"

Membership - Suggestions from Steve

Pat asked, perhaps rhetorically, "Are there situations where we're better off letting a pack fold?" Ken had a ready answer and described a pack he visited where the leadership was so incompetent that there simply was no hope. Tom Molnar happened to be there with

Ken and agreed. Pat said, "This is what I was talking about earlier. This is where someone from the Council should get involved to address the issue."

Steve disagreed and said, "No, this is a Chartered Sponsor responsibility," and then told the story of how he watched a Catholic priest simply fire his troop's Scoutmaster, Committee Chair, and COR. The priest explained that each was okay individually, "But they had an inability to work together, and it was destroying the troop." Steve described the priest as "A Chartered Partner who had buy-in and ownership of the value of the program."

Steve proposed, "What if we, from the get-go, convinced a Chartered Partner to have that sort of buy-in?" Referring to Ken and Tom's example, he said, "What that case needed was a visit to the Chartered Partner in order to say, 'This guy has got to go!" He added that it's not the Council that approves the leadership, but rather the Chartered Partner.

In response to Ken's question, Steve said that the Council actually has no idea how many Chartered Partners or COR's have taken training and said to Warren, "Let's get COR training sessions on the calendar, and let's do it twice a year." He added, "Let's go after our Chartered Reps and tell them that we need to have them trained." Warren suggested having a second person from the unit attend as well. Ken suggested giving CORs some guidance about what he called, "The issues in the newspapers."

Steve then proposed making COR training mandatory within Three Rivers District, to which Warren predicted that National may make it mandatory within three to five years. Warren added that any such decision would have to wait for National to successfully integrate its two major computer systems, Scoutnet and MyScouting, where the latter contains training records -- except for any records still on paper that were never input.

Norman Kasser doubted that his troop's COR would see the need to attend training, because he would think that he now has a successful unit, and would thus doubt that he would learn anything useful. Norman said, "If you wanted him to attend, you'd have to say something like, 'If you're that successful, maybe you can come and teach the other CORs how to do it."

Steve described a hypothetical failing unit and listed the three things that was causing it to fail: Substandard leadership, poor program where neither kids nor parents see any value, and "More than likely, a completely uninvolved Chartered Partner." He asked, "Strong leaders and strong Chartered Partners -- how can we support that?"

Returning to Steve's proposal for making COR training mandatory, Warren recalled that Minsi Trails Council was the first in the nation to make training mandatory "by Executive Board fiat!" Similarly, the former Bergen Council was one of the first to make Youth Protection Training mandatory. Steve recalled that two of NNJC's former districts had mandatory requirements and put the word "compulsory" on their flyers, resulting in 99% of the units attending.

Following up on what Norman said about his COR and training, Ken said, "We have a hard time staffing training sessions, but we have so many good people out there running functioning units -- if only we could get them to come in and assist."

A side discussion about Roundtable attendance and District size

Ken said that he was surprised that the larger Three Rivers District has pretty much the same Roundtable attendance that he experienced in his smaller former Tantaqua District. Warren blamed the large area that TRD covers and the long drive times required, even without traffic. Pat agreed and told of many times he was stuck in traffic while driving from one end of the district to the other.

A side discussion about district e-mail distribution

Ken asked, "Are we getting information out to all the units?" Steve said, "I think we are, " but Ken doubted it and said, "I never get Norm's e-mails any more. Several other leaders told me that they don't get them either." Ken proposed switching to regular mail for his Roundtable notices, saying that he already has cards printed and taking up Steve's offer to print labels for Cubmasters and Committee Chairs. Pat proposed a second mailing for Scoutmasters and their Chairs.

Surprisingly, Norman agreed with Ken and said that one of his two e-mail addresses gets messages while the other does not. He explained that he does not have the security access to manage the Doubleknot list due to a management decision, and that he only has limited access to the entire TRD distribution list of about 600 people. By "limited" he meant that the names he sees are not necessarily the same names that Doubleknot will broadcast to when he hits the "Send" button. Furthermore, he does not get to see whose e-mail might have been rejected due to spelling errors or full in-boxes.

Warren asked Norman to revisit the decision about limited security access, saying that the new Council leadership appears to be more willing to allow access, citing his own new ability to "pull registration information for every event I'm connected with."

Finance - Scheduling Friends of Scouting (FOS) presentations

Steve laughed as he said that the target is to have 50% of units committed to receive a presentation by December 15 -- next week. However, he thought that he might be able to get a fair number of sign-ups at the upcoming Roundtable. Ken proposed handling FOS sign-ups in the same way that units sign up for the annual popcorn sale.

Finance - Training FOS presenters

Pat's question about a new date for the postponed FOS presenter training session triggered a lengthy discussion of possibilities. The final decision was to piggyback onto the January 8 Roundtable, making use of an extra room.

Finance - Leadership FOS Campaign

Joel said that the campaign will kick off as part of next month's District Committee meeting, but Steve pointed out that the campaign had already started when the professional staff made their contributions. He said that the goal is the same as last year's \$10,000, and that the staff contributions had already put us at 16%. As for last year, Steve said that we ended just \$200 short of the goal.

Finance - The Finance Steering Committee

Steve said that the Steering Committee will meet on December 18 and listed the expected attendees: Biff Van Kleef (Family FOS), Leadership FOS (Bob [Lilley?]), Community FOS (Norman Guerra), Dave Wolf (Golf Outing), and Pat. Steve said that Joe Healy will "orchestrate" the event. Pat said he will double-check with Guerra and then related some of the commitments that Guerra has made to both the Scouts and to Hudson County.

Finance - How to Pay for Refreshments

Ken said that collection boxes for refreshments served at Roundtable and District Committee meetings rarely cover expenses, and the problem will come up again for the no-charge spring District picnic. Ken said that in past years Ken Bookspan would raise the money by selling Tootsie chocolate lollipops and Maria Nigro would bring in something to raffle off. Pat volunteered to fill in.

A side discussion about hurricane relief

Ken said he had not yet received a "Toys-for-Tots" flyer for distribution at the Roundtable, which prompted Pat to say "Maybe you want to do something for flood victims." This set off a lengthy discussion raising these points:

- **Collections:** Steve said that collecting items is fairly easy. What is hard is the logistics of getting what is needed, where it's needed, and getting it there.
- **Collections:** Pat proposed collecting toys for kids, and then having local Scout unit work out how to distribute them in their respective communities.
- Collections: Ken said that Joel had a call from someone who wanted to donate clothing, but Steve said, "No one wants clothing."
- **Collections:** Steve said that the first batch of donations to the Council was a "trickle," whereas the second batch was huge, and a lot of it is still piled up in the foyer.
- Collections: Pat said that people saw the drive as an opportunity to "get rid of old stuff." Steve said, "I saw some old computer monitors in the pile."
- Other organizations: Ken said that the Meadowlands Commission ran a successful "Basket Brigade" in November and was planing to do one again this month. They have addresses of needy families and deliver items directly.
- Other organizations: When NNJC did it's first collection, Leslie Sonkin was in touch with an organization in Tenafly that handled the distribution.
- Other organizations: Ken said that there is a Masonic Lodge in Toms River that handles everything and may be able to handle the excess clothing now in the Council's office.

- Other organizations: Tom said that the Jersey Shore Council had partnered with "Rebuild Our Shore," and that they would also accept clothing at a drop-off point in Toms River.
- Other organizations: Ken said that the Center for Food Action received a lot of our donated food, but he was not sure that any of it got to hard-hit communities like Little Ferry, Moonachie, or Hackensack. Warren said that the Center can also handle cleaning supplies.
- Other organizations: Pat said that Leslie and his wife Barbara had contacted the Greater New York Councils to find out what can be done to assist Staten Island.

Steve said, "These storms won't go away," and proposed that the Council needs some kind of in-place plan that can be activated when needed. For this storm, he said, "We wound up laying the groundwork after the fact." Ken said that he had immediately received well-prepared form letters from Central NJ Council and Jersey Shore Council, saying, "They were so on top of things." Pat proposed postponing the discussion about an action plan until Leslie could be present to participate.

Training: New Eagle Project Workbook for Scoutmasters

Joel said that Ken Dutcher is planning to run a session in mid-February in Montvale similar to one run last June. Ken and Tom both called it a very good course. Pat agreed and said that he'd also like to schedule a session in Hudson County, possibly in Lincoln Park. Ken proposed making the course mandatory for Scoutmasters and Pat agreed.

Warren noted that neither this course nor the earlier proposed session for CORs is a standard Scout course, which means that neither can be found on MyScouting.org, which means that it will be difficult to track who attended which.

Communications: Software problem at Doubleknot

Norman said that a software problem suddenly cropped up that was preventing him from broadcasting e-mails, and was also preventing Eric Dlugosz from updating the District website. He said, "I was about to send a reminder about the upcoming Roundtable and the OA meeting and the Christmas present grab-bag, but Doubleknot failed to react when I hit the Send button."

He said that Doubleknot support so far was not helpful, because they could not reproduce the problem. However, Rob Coonce is able to broadcast messages and volunteered to handle stuff for TRD until things get straightened out. Steve asked Norman to keep Mike Cowan in the loop, saying, "He's the closest we have to an in-house IT guy."

Planning for a Council Exec's Fireside Chat

Steve said that is waiting to hear from Leslie about scheduling a Fireside Chat. He explained that the Council leadership (Steve Grey, Pat Coviello, Phil Mollica, and possibly Mark Barnard) wants to hold informal talks with some of the unit leaders who have little interaction with the Council or District. They want to find out why they don't use the Council camps, nor allow FOS presentations, nor sell popcorn. Steve said, "They

want to facilitate a conversation in a relaxed manner. They'll ask what can be done better and try to spot issues that can be improved upon." Warren said, "These guys listen a lot better than anyone we've had in a long time."

Steve said that Leslie volunteered to host the sessions at her house on two Fridays, perhaps 10 at a time. Steve asked people present tonight to suggest likely candidates to invite. In response to Tom's question, Steve said that it's not necessary to differentiate between Cub versus Scout units, however he thought it best to have units "within striking distance" of Leslie's home in Palisades Park.

Steve elaborated by saying, "There are units who think that the program ends at the unit-level. They don't know that the district exists, nor have they any interest other than having someone handle advancement and Eagle Scouts." He said, "One of the questions to be posed is, 'How come you are uninvolved?"" Tom said, "This is about units that have an ongoing program, not units that are about to fall apart. They're continuing, but on their own terms." Steve added, "We have a lot of program support, maybe the most of any district, and it's possible that a Cubmaster or Den Leader might not know that this exists for them -- maybe they should be there too."

Ken proposed doing the same thing at the district level, that is, have three TRD Committee members visit unit leaders and conduct similar conversations. Pat said that he'd also like the Council execs to come to one of our meetings and tell the District Committee about their plans.

Three announcements from Ed Quinn

Ed Quinn said that he has a new large flag for the Three Rivers District, currently downstairs in his car. However it says "Three River" so he has to send it back for the final "s". Tom picked up on an ongoing joke and asked Ed to change it to "Four Rivers."

Ed said he now has tickets for the February 8 "Scouter of the Year" beefsteak dinner.

Ed said he has about 50 items ready for the OA Trade-o-Ree fund-raiser in March. Steve asked if TRD should also try to run a Trade-o-Ree or auction to raise operating funds for the District, such as the refreshments discussed earlier.

Printed Program Resource Guide for 2013

Steve was quite enthusiastic about a draft handout he passed around. He described it as similar to the printed calendars that the Council used to publish, except that it will contain ads purchased by local businesses, such as Campmor, Ramsey, EMS, and the bowling alleys we use. Steve said that he, Joel, and Oliris did a brainstrorming session and easily came up with \$10,000 worth of ads, with profits going to our Community FOS campaign.

Ken said that he has a meeting shortly with the Meadowlands Commission and asked Steve for a clean copy to present to them, but Steve doubted he could have anything suitable that would be ready in time.

Council Program Launch and Camping Information

Warren said that Pat Coviello wants to restart the Program Launch events that the Council used to run, saying, "Pat thinks that a Program Launch is a great opportunity to announce programs across the entire Council."

Ken recalled that there also used to be camping kick-offs in October, which reminded Steve that the Council had already published information for the 2013 session. Unfortunately he did not have a copy with him tonight, but he said, "This is the earliest I've ever seen this come out."

Three upcoming training sessions

Warren said that there will be an EDGE session on February 2, noting that EDGE certification is required for any trainer, and he again mentioned the March 2 Pow Wow. Warren also promoted the January 12 Wood Badge Dining Out event because the guest speaker will be Regional President Hab Butler, whom Warren recommended highly as one of the most respected Scouters in the country. "He's an incredible man!"

Order of the Arrow

Warren said that the OA Banquet will take place on January 6 at the Paramus Elks Club. He said that the TRD Chapter has the best attendance in the Council, with three times as many as Ramapo Valley. Warren was disappointed that of 80 Scout troops in the district, only 16 called for an OA election. Ed said that his troop's Scoutmaster is not good with computers and will thus have a problem with the new online system for requesting an election. Warren suggested that the Scoutmaster can use one of the free computers at the Council office, and pointed out that Bob Manzari had conducted many of the 16 elections without the benefit of either e-mail or a cell phone. Pat said, "You can say whatever you want about Manzari, but he is certainly dedicated!" Pat added that he is trying to get a representative from the OA to attend District Committee meetings.

District Committee Meeting December 6, 2012

Attendance

Greg Boyle

Warren Dressler

Kenneth Hesse

Norman Kasser

Steve Leonardi

Joel Lieberman

Tom Molnar

John Musser

Ed Quinn

Pat Stamato

Jim Wrynn